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**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## INTRODUCTION

At a meeting of the Executive Council of the Federation of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India held in September 1975, it was suggested that since the 2nd World Zoroastrian Congress was last held in 1964, the time was ripe—in fact overdue—for holding the 3rd World Zoroastrian Congress. Lady Cowasjee Jehangir, Chairman of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat, who was also an ex-officio Chairman of the Federation, was little apprehensive about the Federation being in a position to undertake the rather onerous task of successfully organising and holding the Congress since it had no Secretariat of its own. It was, therefore, suggested that the Trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat should be entrusted with the organisation of the Congress. Since the majority of the Trustees were present at this meeting, a decision was taken that the Bombay Parsi Panchayat should be entrusted with the responsibility of organising and holding the 3rd World Zoroastrian Congress, and the Chairman of the Panchayat would be the Chairman of the Main Committee.

However, it was also decided that a special Committee, called the Executive Committee, should be formed, which apart from a few Trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat, would also consist of prominent persons of the Parsi Community. To this Executive Committee was given the task of making all the arrangements for holding the Congress in December 1977. Mr. Jamshed N. Guzder, a Trustee of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat, was appointed Chairman of the Executive Committee, the other members being:—

Mr. B. K. Boman-Behram  
 Dr. A. F. Golwalla  
 Mr. Eruch B. Desai  
 Mr. J. R. Vimadala  
 Mr. N. R. Mulla  
 Mr. M. J. R. Gheyara  
 Mr. H. J. H. Taleyarkhan  
 Sir Jamshedjee Jeejeebhoy  
 Mr. Cowasji Adenwala  
 Mrs. Najoo Bhabha  
 Mr. M. N. Bhaya  
 Mrs. Gulestan Billimoria  
 Mr. Bejonjee S. Chacha  
 Mr. Adi Chinoy  
 Mr. H. D. Choksey  
 Mr. S. Daver  
 Mr. S. F. Desai  
 Dr. Homi Dhalla  
 Mrs. P. F. Dotivala  
 Mr. S. P. Godrej  
 Mrs. Banoo Irani  
 Mr. Dinshaw B. Irani

Mr. Noshir D. Irani  
 Mr. N. B. Jeejeebhoy  
 Mr. Firoze Jhabwala  
 Mr. Sohrab Katpitia  
 Mr. Peshotan Kuka  
 Mr. J. N. Marshall  
 Dr. Ratan R. Marshall  
 Mrs. Katy F. Mehta  
 Dasturji N. D. Minocher Homji  
 Mr. Dadi E. Mistry  
 Davar Kavasji T. Modi  
 Mr. Soli Pavri  
 Mrs. Homai N. Pudumjee  
 Mr. Rustom C. Santook  
 Mrs. Freney Satarwalla  
 Mr. J. F. Shroff  
 Mrs. T. H. Taleyarkhan  
 Mr. N. E. Turel  
 Mrs. Shera Vajifdar  
 Mr. P. D. Nargolwala  
 Mr. N. H. Vacha

} Jt. Hon.  
 } Secretaries.

Unfortunately, Lady Jehangir expired on 9th June, 1976, and Mr. Erach Nadirshah became the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat.



About this time it was realised that it would not be possible to hold the Congress in December 1977, as decided earlier, and the date was therefore extended to early January 1978.

On 30th July 1977, Mr. Erach Nadirshah retired as a Chairman of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat and he was succeeded by Mr. B. K. Boman-Behram, who took over as Chairman of the Board of Trustees as well as Chairman of the Federation of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India. He had already been appointed previously a Chairman of the Main Committee of the 3rd World Zoroastrian Congress.

Here it must be recorded with appreciation the part that Mr. Boman-Behram played in the organisation of the Congress. He was a pillar of strength and, but for his encouragement, advice and support, the Congress would not have been held, for many were the occasions and crisis when it was felt that the Congress should be abandoned.

The Congress was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Shri B. D. Jatti, Vice-President of India, on Wednesday, 4th January, 1978 at 5.30 p.m. at the Birla Matu-shri Sabhagar. The Hall was packed to capacity and arrangements had to be made for extra seating in the wings and aisles. It is estimated that over 1400 people were present.

Details of the Inauguration programme and the names of the eminent personalities who participated in this function appear in the Report.

The next four days, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th January 1978, were devoted to the plenary and workshop sessions which continued the whole day and were held at the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Hall, when matters of vital importance to the community, both in India and abroad, and to the Zoroastrian religion were discussed. Details of the Sessions appear in the Report.

On the evenings of 6th and 7th January entertainment programmes were arranged and some of the photographs taken at these two functions appear in this Report. One of the highlights of the entertainment programme was an audio-visual presentation of the history of Zoroastrians in India, for which full credit goes to the organiser of this show, Mrs. Homai N. Pudumjee, and the Producer, Mr. Homi J. Daruwalla and the band of devoted helpers.

Mr. Jamshed N. Guzder presided at the concluding session held on the afternoon of Sunday, 8th January. At this session an attempt was made to assess the results of the various deliberations that took place during the past four days and arising out of that, to formulate a plan for future course of action whereby the communities in India and abroad could maintain a close liaison with each other, further the cause of the Zoroastrian religion, and devise ways and means of ensuring that the younger generation be brought up in an environment in which they could appreciate, understand and follow the Zoroastrian Religion, in order that they may continue to remain in the fold and learn to serve their community in the best traditions compatible with the teachings of Zarathushtra.

One of the decisions taken was that a World Federation of Zoroastrian Anjumans be established, and in order to implement this proposal it was decided that first a link organisation should be formed, consisting of about 10 to 12 members, representing the various Zoroastrian Anjumans/Associations located in the different continents of the world. At the suggestion of Dr. Farhang Mehr, it was

decided to entrust Mr. Jamshed N. Guzder with the task of setting up this link organisation.

Subsequently, in the following months serious attempts were made to establish this Link Body and Federations, Anjumans and Associations in all the five continents were approached to nominate representatives. Unfortunately, in the meantime, political changes of grave consequences took place in Iran, the country having the second largest Zoroastrian population. Because of the uncertainty there and the events that followed, it was felt, after some time, that the time was not opportune then for the formation of a World Federation of Zoroastrian Anjumans.

Was the Congress a success? Was all the work and effort that went into organising this Congress worth while and justified? What did it achieve? The answers to the first two questions are a most emphatic 'yes'. As far as the third question is concerned, the Congress was instrumental in creating a remarkable awakening among Zoroastrians, both in India and abroad. It revived the association between the Anjumans abroad, and the Federations, Panchayats and Associations in India. It made the Zoroastrians both in India and abroad, conscious of the fact that in order to survive it was necessary to maintain a close and on-going contact with each other and the Parent Panchayat in Bombay. But looking at it in retrospect, the most remarkable effect was on the Zoroastrian community in India, especially in Bombay. This section of the community, which comprises the largest number of Zoroastrians in the world, had become dormant, passive and inactive owing to many reasons, one of the principal being the absence of dynamic leadership.

The 3rd World Zoroastrian Congress stirred the imagination and emotions of the members of the community, both old and young, so that slowly but steadily those who had decided to let things drift became conscious of their obligations and their relative roles in the community. It was as a result of this awakening, which was purely activated by the Congress, that the community today has become conscious of its obligations and responsibilities, and therefore we find the welcome change of a large number of people involving themselves in the affairs of the Community.

As a result of the success of the 3rd World Zoroastrian Congress it was resolved that the 4th congress should be held within the next three to five years, that is, before 1983, and it is hoped that this expectation will be fulfilled with the help of the members of the community.

In conclusion, special mention must be made here of Mr. Shapur Desai. He had been associated with the affairs of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat for many years and was its Secretary from 1941 to 1970. He was a great support to the Executive Committee and special thanks are due to him for undertaking the onerous task of summarising the Reports of each Session, included in this Report.

Special mention must also be made of Mr. Peshotan D. Nargolwalla, who was the Joint Hon. Secretary of the Congress along with Cdr. N. H. Vacha, Joint Secretary of the Parsi Panchayat. They were instrumental in making the Congress a great success.

Special mention must also be made of Mr. Noshir D. Irani, who designed the logo for the Congress and was in charge of Publicity and Public Relations. He

also acted as the Master of Ceremonies at the Inauguration and the subsequent sessions.

Finally, one would be failing in one's duty if due appreciation was not recorded of the excellent, exemplary and out of the ordinary efforts that were put in by the officers and staff of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat organisation in order to make the Congress a great success. While everyone co-operated and contributed to the effort, particular mention must be made here of some of the workers like Cdr. N. Vacha, and Miss Gool Tata.

30.6.1981

JAMSHED N. GUZDER



# REPORT OF THE THIRD WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS

Wednesday 4th to Sunday 8th January 1978

Wednesday, 4th January 1978

## INAUGURATION

by

THE HON'BLE SHRI B. D. JATTI,  
THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF INDIA.

Venue : Birla Matushri Sabhagar,  
New Marine Lines,  
Bombay.

Time : 5.30 P.M.

The Chief Guest of the evening was Mr. B. D. Jatti, Vice-President of India. The other dignitaries present were His Excellency Shri Sadiq Ali, Governor of Maharashtra, the Hon'ble Shri Vasant Rao Patil, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, and His Excellency Mr. Mahsud Mohdal, Consul General of Iran. India's Ambassador to the United States of America, Mr. Nani Palkhivala and Mrs. Palkhivala and Marchioness of Winchester were also present.

The meeting started with Prayer and Invocation by learned Dasturji Navrooz D. Minocher-Homji. It was a stirring and appropriate prayer for the occasion. The theme of it was Unity, Understanding and Strength. It said:

"This is our joint prayer for unity and understanding and strength. May we live and work in consonance with men and women of merit, virtue and truth. May we live and work in consonance with men and women who are promoters of benevolence and goodness. May we live and work in consonance with souls in full possession of life and wisdom. May we live and work in consonance with souls whose merits and virtues are ever multiplying till the goal is achieved. May we live and work in consonance with souls whose demerits and faults are ever declining till their footsteps are firm again on the right path. May we live and work in consonance with the religion of good life that is religion of Zoroastrians whose motto is redemption only through righteous action. May we be so studious and reverent as to render the essentials of religion precise and clear. May we live and work in consonance with Ahura Mazda, the beneficent creative wisdom whose form is light, whose spirit truth. May we live and work in consonance with the supreme perfection of Ahura Mazda whose unique pattern is woven by the Prophet in the Gatha, the song divine of Zarathushtra and last but not the least, may we live and work in consonance with the light and direction of religion that our life shall be edifying and our character "exemplary. May our deliberations culminate in goodness and truth and service. Amen."

## Messages :

Mesages were received from the President of India, Shri Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, Vice President of India, Shri B. D. Jatti, the Prime Minister of India, Shri Morarji Desai, the Governor of Maharashtra, Shri Sadiq Ali, His Imperial

Majesty, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shahanshah, Aryamehr of Iran, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri V. P. Patil, Member of Parliament Shri Y. B. Chavan and the Ambassador of India in U.S.A. Shri N. A. Palkhivala. They were :

**The President of India, Shri Neelam Sanjiva Reddy :**

"On the occasion of the Third World Zoroastrian Congress, I send my greetings and good wishes to the Parsi Community in India as well as to all participants in the Congress. It behoves all men of goodwill to meet together and device steps for promoting world peace and solidarity."

**The Vice President of India, Shri B. D. Jatti :**

"I am glad to learn that the Third World Zoroastrian Congress will be held in Bombay from the 4th January, 1978.

"The Parsis in India have remained true to their religion which laid special emphasis on the method of 'attainment (of God) through service of humanity'.

"They have made a significant contribution to the economic progress of the country, and continue to play an important role in the political and economic life of the nation. By their charitable disposition they have earned the love and admiration of their fellow countrymen.

"I send my best wishes for the success of the Congress."

**The Prime Minister of India, Shri Morarji Desai:**

"Zoroastrianism is one of the great religions of the world. Even though the number of the followers of this faith has shrunk, the teaching of Zoroaster has a perennial relevance. Zoroastrians have now been an integral part of Indian society and by their philosophical tradition have influenced the Indian spiritual thought and experience and have also been influenced by them. The integrity, diligence and resourcefulness of Parsis are well known and these have helped them to play a pioneering role in many spheres of our economic, social and cultural life. They have truly earned the esteem of the entire nation."

"I send my good wishes for the success of the Third Zoroastrian Congress which is being held in Bombay early next month."

**The Governor of Maharashtra, Shri Sadiq Ali:**

"For a microscopically small community, the contribution made by the Parsis to national awakening and economic progress has been surprisingly substantial. They have been vigorous in civic life and adventurous and innovative in trade and industry. They have also played no small part in the cultural life of the country. They have set up several charitable and philanthropic institutions which are rendering valuable service. The number of great men they have produced in most spheres of national life would do credit to any community in India. On the occasion of the Third World Zoroastrian Congress

to be held in Bombay, I send my greetings to the organisers, and delegates and wish the function every success."

**His Imperial Majesty, Mohammad Reza Pahlvi, the Shahanshah, Aryamehr of Iran:**

Read out by His Excellency, Dr. Farhang Mehr.

"On the occasion of the congregation of Zoroastrians for the 3rd World Zoroastrian Congress, I would like to convey my best wishes for the success of this Congress which will be dealing with the various aspects of religion, education and socio-economic conditions of the Zoroastrian community all over the world.

"To the extent that the topics of the Congress relate to the ancient Iranian culture and civilization, it is naturally of great interest to me and to my country.

"I hope that as a result of your deliberations in the areas directly relating to the Zoroastrian Community and its history, a better understanding of the glorious ancient Iranian culture and civilization will be achieved.

"Eighteen years have elapsed since the First World Zoroastrian Congress was held in Iran. During this period, we witnessed the celebration of the 2500th Anniversary of the founding of the Persian Empire.

"This event was not only a reminder of the grandeur of the first Aryan rule in world history, but also provided us with an opportunity to cherish the exalted moral values on which was based the social foundation of ancient Iranian society practising the three principles of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

"The Zoroastrian Community, which is the original heir of these glorious human traditions, is today, as in ancient times, the true follower and defender of these noble principles.

"The extensive social activities and the numerous cultural, benevolent and charitable institutions, all of which are a credit to the community, testify to the fact that these ancient exalted traditions have been preserved intact by the Zoroastrians all over the world through the ages.

"The Zoroastrian communities all over the world, through their endeavours and their high moral values, and as a result of their exemplary conduct, command worldwide respect.

"It is evident that in Iran, which is the country of origin of this community, this respect is most pronounced.

"I sincerely hope that all Zoroastrians of the world will enjoy ever increasing happiness, progress and prosperity in their respective countries, which, by their exemplary behaviour, they so rightly deserve.

"I wish every success to the Third World Zoroastrian Congress in achieving its objectives."



**The Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri Vasantao Patil:**

"Maharashtra is the home of the Parsi community in India and is proud of the fact. I have reason to believe that the Parsi community reciprocates the sentiment. The contribution made by the Parsis, even though they are so small in number, to the development of Bombay in particular in the economic, social, political, educational and other fields, is so noteworthy that it needs hardly to be elaborated. Equally noteworthy is the natural and easy way in which they have achieved integration in the life of the State and their identification with humanitarian causes irrespective of caste, creed, class or community.

"How fitting that the World Zoroastrian Congress should meet in this home of the Parsis. I am sure that the Congress will further strengthen the bond that exists between this State and the World Zoroastrian Community through the Parsi Community in the State. I wish our Zoroastrian friends the world over the most glorious future."

**Member of Parliament Shri Y. B. Chavan:**

"I have always had great admiration for the Parsi community. It has always been so purposeful and creative. It has not been deterred by the smallness of its numbers. It has courageously forged ahead in the service of the motherland and distinguished itself through its many illustrious sons and daughters in various fields of national activities, be they political, economic or cultural.

"Pioneers in many spheres of the country's development, like industry, shipping, education and other social services, this dynamic community is also the most cosmopolitan in its charities. Many of the finest institutions in Bombay and elsewhere bear the hallmark of their philanthropy and are the landmark of progress in any part of the country where their munificence has reached.

"The names of Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozshah Mehta, Dinshaw Vacha, Jamshedji Tata stand out among so many others which through the generations have left their impressions in the sands of time in the great history of our country.

"Perhaps the most redeeming quality of the Parsi trait has been that this community never asked for any separate representation or reservation of seats anywhere. In spite of knowing that not by not so doing particularly because of its numerical inferiority, it ran the risk of not being sufficiently recognized in political or other walks of life, it still insisted on standing on its own merits and was confident enough that that such merits and integrity would be its own reward. By reposing such confidence in the country's leaders, it was not mistaken. The community's ability was recognized in all fields whether governmental or otherwise. There have been Parsi Ministers in the Union and State Governments, Ambassadors of India in various countries, Chief Judges and Judges, Members of Parliament and of the Legislatures, civic leaders, leaders of industry, trade and commerce, etc. All this greatly redounds to their credit.

"I am sure the Third World Zoroastrian Congress will be a great success. Parsis of India from all parts of our country and those who reside abroad will be attending the Congress in large numbers to take stock of the contribution and the progress the community has made and the problems which need to be attended to, like there are in every community. I wish the Congress all success in its deliberations."

**Ambassador of India in U.S.A. Shri N. A. Palkhivala:**

"Zoroastrians constitute one of the smallest communities in the world. They have had a great past, and their achievements at present have certainly been significant. But their long-term future depends upon their adapting themselves to the changing world."

"In my opinion, a spirit of tolerance is an absolute necessity at this juncture in our community's history. We must understand and respect the other point of view and we must have the feeling of basic unity among all members of the community."

"I hope different religious, cultural and economic ideas will be freely and frankly debated at the Third World Zoroastrian Congress and that those who will have come from different parts of the world will find the meeting rewarding and fulfilling."

"My best wishes for an exceptionally successful Congress."

In his Welcome Address the President of the Third World Zoroastrian Congress, Mr. B. K. Boman-Behram, said:

"It is our privilege and pleasure to extend to you all a warm welcome on behalf of the organisers of the III World Zoroastrian Congress and request your co-operation and participation in the deliberations that will take place in the plenary sessions and the workshops. I am grateful to Shri B. D. Jatti, Vice President of India, for having kindly agreed to inaugurate this Congress in spite of his very pressing engagements. We are also grateful to His Excellency Shri Sadiq Ali, Governor of Maharashtra, for attending this inaugural sessions and to the Hon'ble Shri Vasant Rao Patil, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, for consenting to be the Chief Guest of the evening and Smt. Shalinibai Patil for gracing the occasion with her presence. The Members of my Committee and I are grateful to the delegates from outside India and other distant parts of India who have accepted our invitation and travelled hundreds of miles to make this Congress a success."

"2. Two World Congress of Zoroastrians have been held so far. The first was in Iran in 1960. The second was in Bombay in 1964 under the auspices of the Parsi Punchayet of Bombay. The outcome of the Second Congress was in creation of the All India Federation of the Parsi Anjumans of India which embraces about 57 Parsi Anjumans and Punchayets. The Third Congress is now held again in Bombay at the request of a large number of members of the community both here and abroad. It is held no doubt under the formal auspices of the Federation of Parsi Anjumans of India, but I am glad to say that the Parsi Punchayet of Bombay has un-



grudgingly shouldered the burden and responsibility of organising the Congress with the co-operation and blessings of other Anjumans and Punchayets all over the country.

"3. The theme of the Congress this time is a very apt one. It is: 'The Zoroastrian Community in a Changing World'. Between 1964 and 1977, the World has been in the grip of change. Technology has made breathtaking strides and ushered in, not only the nuclear era, but what is popularly known as The Space Age as well. We live in the age of technocrats. And Technology with its wide repercussions is bound to tell and does tell on the transformation of our normal socio-economic conditions and confronts us with new problems which our forefathers had not faced. It is, however, not only a changing but a turbulent world we are living in. It may be that turbulence is sometimes a mark of change—a concomitant of it. It may be that we are passing through a period of transition from an old, dying civilisation to a new and vigorous one. Realising this, it is time that we of the Zoroastrian community made an assessment of the situation and the challenge it poses and adjust ourselves to the new world that is springing up around us. Shall we face and adapt ourselves to the Great Surge or retreat from it and get lost? If I may put it in other words, this poser is the key-note of the Congress. If the great historian Toynbee's theory be correct, a nation or community or civilization to survive must respond to the challenge of environment produced by a changing world.

"4. Our own country has felt the impact of this world change. In social and economic spheres our country, in its aspiration to keep pace with—the rest of the world has undertaken and continues to undertake vast projects and has embarked on bold experiments to improve the lot of the people. No doubt, poverty and overpopulation are formidable barriers to change. Knowing, however, the Indian masses as we do, we may be confident that whatever barriers there are, will be broken down and our nation will march steadfastly towards the goal we have set ourselves. Only very recently the people of India have demonstrated their unshakeable faith in the values of freedom and democracy.

"5. Scientific or technological advances, however great, do not mean the ouster of religion. Man is a spiritual being and his longing for spiritual satisfaction will always remain. This Congress will therefore discuss among other topics the effectiveness of religion in our changing world.

"6. Before I proceed, let me add a word more. I shall like to say categorically that, so far as we Parsis in India are concerned, this country is our home. We are grateful to this country for giving us refuge when we fled from Iran 1300 years ago, thereby enabling us to preserve what is our most precious heritage—the Zoroastrian religion and our religious customs and practices. We have identified ourselves with the Indian people without however losing our individuality as a community. The saying of one of the greatest statesmen India has produced and one of the greatest Parsis of all times still echoes in our ears. What did he say? On every occasion, public or private, Sir

Pheroze Shah Mehta used to say: "To my mind, a Parsi is a better Parsi, as a Mahomedan or a Hindu is a better and truer Mahomedan or Hindu, the more he is attached to the land which gave him birth, the more he is bound in brotherly relations and affection to all the children of the soil, the more he recognises the fraternity of all the native communities of the country, and the immutable bond which binds them together in the pursuit of common aims and objects under a common Government". These words of Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta should epitomise the attitude of enlightened Parsis. Sir Pheroze Shah refused to be aloof from our sister communities. He chose to be with them. So did many a Parsi stalwart of the old days who fought the British rulers for the country's freedom. That is the reason why we Parsis in India have not demanded, though offered during the British regime, special representation or reserved seats as a minority community to any legislative or civic body or, for the matter of that, any public body. We relied on the fairness and tolerance of our sister communities and our trust in them has been rewarding. At the same time I must say that, though we are Indians, we are also Zoroastrians. The Zoroastrian religion is the bond that keeps the Zoroastrian community together in whichever part of the world it may exist.

"7. You will observe from the programme placed in your hands that the topics to be discussed in the papers and in the workshops cover a wide range. These topics point to the problems facing the Zoroastrian community to-day. I do not wish to make any comment or anticipate the discussions which may be held on them. I, however, do hope and expect that the discussions will be carried on in a restrained manner without acrimony and with tolerance for the 'the other fellow's point of view.' In my humble opinion, it will be advisable to consider the common problems touching the Zoroastrians of the world rather than the peculiar or specific problems of the Parsi Zoroastrians of India. I may be permitted to outline a few of these common problems.

"8. The first and foremost problem is that of dwindling numbers of our community. The Zoroastrians or rather the Parsi Zoroastrians the world over number between 1,14,000 and 1,20,000. In India the Parsi Zoroastrian community, according to the census of 1971, numbers 91,266. In 1891 we were 89,887. The peak was reached in 1941 when the community numbered 1,14,890. Thereafter the decline set in and our population to-day is almost the same as in 1891. Since 1941 our population growth has been minus and never plus without having a family planning programme unlike that of some of our sister communities—not that we envy them.

"9. This population decline has generated a fear in some quarters that the Parsi community and particularly the Parsi community in India, may become extinct. Personally, I do not subscribe to this view. I have never been a prophet of doom. In particular, where there are small pockets of Zoroastrians in foreign parts, what I may call desperate remedies, such as conversion or admission of children of Parsi mothers by non-Parsi fathers, are sought or are being seriously



considered. I should like my Parsi brethren from foreign countries to consider seriously whether such measures will afford a real remedy. So far as the majority of the Parsis in India are concerned, I may state that they will not accept such measures of desperation. In this respect the Parsi Panchayets of Bombay and Surat as well as several other Anjumans and Panchayets in India are at one with them. The Parsis in India have managed to retain their identity for the last 1300 years and the community has enough vitality and resourcefulness to survive indefinitely.

"10. There is also a lingering apprehension in certain quarters that with dwindling numbers the Zoroastrians in foreign countries may lose their identity. They seem to be groping for their identity. No doubt, due to environmental change, their outlook and habits of life are also affected. So long, however, as a Zoroastrian, wherever he be, preserves his faith in the tenets of the Zoroastrian religion and also its outward symbols, there need be no fear of loss of identity. Our guiding maxim should be: 'Wherever a Zoroastrian is, Zoroastrianism must be'. Zoroastrianism is both a religion and a way of life and if the flame is kept burning within us, a Zoroastrian from one far corner of the world will certainly be able to recognise and identify himself with a Zoroastrian in another far corner.

"11. As you all know, the prime purpose of the Congress is to bring together the Zoroastrians from all parts of the world. In other words, it is a search for Zoroastrian unity. Zoroastrian unity is a sine qua non of our existence as a Zoroastrian community. The means and methods of achieving this unity will no doubt be discussed. One means should be exchange of views and understanding of each other's problems. Another means "would be to impart religious teaching to Zoroastrians outside India by sending learned priests and mobeds with missionary zeal. An important concrete measure to promote unity is setting up of an organisation to provide a link between world Zoroastrians and continuity of action after each Zoroastrian congress. This is a very important topic for discussion and I hope that the delegates and members will furnish us with concrete suggestions for setting up such an organisation.

"12. We may or we may not learn some lessons from this Congress. But one lesson which our religion teaches us has always to be remembered. Zoroastrianism as a way of life points to one path for all and that is the path of Asha — the path of righteousness. This lesson has been in-built in our character. Zoroastrianism has also taught us that to be happy we have to bring happiness to others. That teaching has motivated the Parsi community in India and we have sought to repay in some measure the debt we owe to this great country. To quote the masterly language of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta again: 'I would say that charity should begin at home and end abroad. By all means let the Parsis provide for all that is necessary for their own community, but after supplying the needs of their own co-religionists, let them look beyond their own narrow sphere, for we should remember that we are bound to extend our charitable work to other communities as well. How can we lose sight of the fact that in times of our misfortune and

distress, our Hindu brethren had given us shelter 1,300 years ago, long before the British came to India and took possession of this land? We owe therefore a sacred duty to them, their community and their country — a duty which it would be ungrateful and unworthy of a great community like ours if we let it unredeemed in these times of our great prosperity and affluence'. This was said in 1912. But before and after Sir Pherozeshah Mehta uttered those memorable words, our contribution to the development of the country has been far out of proportion to our numbers. I will mention one name only here by way of illustration — the name of the father of the industrial revolution in India — Jamshedji Tata. On this auspicious occasion let all Zoroastrians in the true spirit of their great religion resolve to work and work hard for the uplift of the poverty-stricken masses of the developing countries, to bring about unity among ourselves and peace and goodwill for which the whole world longs to-day. Do not worry about the results. Let the results of your work take care of themselves. And in helping others we shall again revive the spirit and courage of our forefathers who braved all hardships for the sake of their religion."

After floral tributes to the distinguished guests Mr. Boman-Behram presented a cheque of Rs. 50,000/- being the first Parsi contribution to the Andhra Pradesh Cyclone Relief Fund.\*

Mr. J. N. Guzder then briefly described the scope and purpose of the IIIrd World Zoroastrian Congress.

He said :

"We are gathered here to-day to mark the beginning of a unique function organised by a community, which is perhaps among the smallest in the world and which has a history peculiar to itself.

"The reason why I use the word 'unique' for this function, although we have had two previous World Congresses, is because this Congress is being held under circumstances which are very different and also after a lapse of a decade and a half, during which time many changes have taken place that will make this Congress a unique one.

"During the next few days, we shall discuss many problems facing the Zoroastrians and the Zoroastrian religion, which also, is unique in many ways. Founded by Zarathushtra, a prophet who lived, preached and died almost four millennia ago, the religion is based on a philosophy so vibrant and dynamic that even after this lapse of time it serves the needs of the present-day troubled world.

"The problems facing the Zoroastrians are many and varied and each group of Zoroastrians settled in different parts of the world has problems peculiar to itself.

"You have just heard it mentioned that out of a total of about 1,15,000 Parsi Zoroastrians, all over the world there are about 91,000 in India and the balance living abroad. Apart from the Parsi Zoroastrians, there are our co-religionists in Iran where they number about 30,000. Therefore, the single largest concentration of Zoroastrians, that

\* Later on a further sum of Rs. 37,078/- was contributed.



is, about 91,000, is in India. Unavoidably, the problems facing the largest group, which is in India, are bound in some measure to predominate and influence the deliberations of this World Congress.

"May I, therefore, urge my fellow-Parsi Zoroastrians not to forget that we are in fact the hosts and that this is a World Zoroastrian Congress and not a Parsi Zoroastrian Congress. Consequently, certain problems, which are peculiar to India alone, should not be allowed to monopolise the attention of the Congress to the exclusion of those problems which the other Zoroastrians from different parts of the world would like to present to the Congress.

"In this connection, six months ago, when I happened to meet in London our distinguished visitor from Iran, Madame Farangis Sharokh Engineer, I assured her, in response to her query, that this Congress is being held primarily to discuss world Zoroastrian problems.

"You are aware that this Congress is being held after a lapse of 14 years and the changes that have taken place during this period around the world have had far-reaching effects on the religious, social and economic life of Zoroastrians all over the world.

"Perhaps at no time since we came to this great country, which we are proud to call our motherland, have we witnessed such large numbers of our people going abroad to study, to find new employment and to settle down. While this has been the experience of many Indian communities, it has been more noticeable among us because of our minuscule numbers.

"For these pockets of Parsi Zoroastrians there are many problems. They have been separated from their relatives, friends and loved ones and this has naturally created anxieties for many here and abroad. Questions have been asked and many remain unanswered. The Congress, therefore, is being principally held to try and solve these problems.

"It is necessary that we discuss and find ways and means of maintaining a close link with our co-religionists abroad, so that not only their children but the succeeding generations will continue to understand, appreciate, respect and follow the religion and philosophy as propounded by Zarathushtra. For this we have specially provided Topic No. 3 — to discuss religious education for the younger generations of Zoroastrians in India and abroad.

"In this fast changing world, in which material considerations seem to predominate in the thinking of Man, we are suddenly faced with the problem that many of our young educated men do not desire to adopt priesthood as a vocation. If a stage is reached when there are no priests readily available, the consequences will be disastrous. In fact, it may threaten the very survival of our religion. We therefore hope to discuss, in some depth, the problems of the priestly class and its amelioration under Topic No. 1.

"Let me give an example. Not long ago, three Anjumans of Iran advertised in the Indian newspapers for Zoroastrian priests to look after their fire temples, offering handsome remuneration. I understand that

the response was totally negative. It is in this context that we look to and rely upon, the stalwarts of our priestly class to assist, help and guide us in finding ways and means of attracting more qualified men to become priests.

"It has often been said that the Zoroastrians, especially in India, are an affluent community, but this today is far from the truth. Mass migration from rural areas to towns has created problems in housing, employment and economic conditions. This will be discussed under Topic No. 2 — Economic Uplift of Zoroastrians both here and abroad, and in Iran.

"Now, what of the future? Because of the rapid changes in the social and economic life of all communities in our country and in this time of so-called permissiveness, our age-old customs, traditions and our respect for certain norms set by our elders are being rapidly eroded. This has greatly upset our present older generation. At the same time, the consequences have somewhat bewildered the younger generation.

"It is necessary that some changes should take place. Indeed it is inevitable. But it is equally imperative that such changes, if any, should be brought about with caution so as not to be detrimental to the survival of our religion and our community. For this Topic No. 5 has been introduced—Social and Cultural Survey of Zoroastrians in the Recent Past and Suggestions for the Future.

"As regards this particular topic, I would like to suggest that the discussions on this subject be on the basis of mutual trust and understanding. No constructive purpose will be served if the sentiments of our elders are deeply hurt or, on the other hand, if the voice of the young is suppressed, so that the fears and anxieties which the young have in their minds are not removed and allayed.

"The general consensus appears to be that the previous two World Congresses did not bring about any fruitful results. Therefore, let me express the hope that this, the 3rd World Congress, will be discent and that it should be our firm resolve to make this Congress the precursor of many more such congresses, to be held at reasonable intervals, so that a close link is maintained between those who are abroad and those who are still here. It is with this view that Topic No. 6 has been introduced to discuss the setting up of an organisation to provide a link between Zoroastrians all over the world ensure continuity of action after each World Zoroastrian Congress.

"In conclusion, let me also express the hope that this Congress will not be an event by itself, but that it will mark the beginning of a new era in history, for the followers of Zarathushtra."

Dr. Farhang Mehr, Chancellor, University of Shiraz and Vice-President of the Congress also spoke on the scope and purpose of the Third World Zoroastrian Congress. He said :

"On the auspicious occasion of the 3rd World Zoroastrian Congress, it is a great honour and heart-felt satisfaction to me to be amongst the venerable dasturs, mobeds, members of the Zoroastrian community. I was present and active in the 1st World Congress and



I had planned to attend the 2nd Congress but due to unexpected pressure of work I was unable to do so much to my disappointment. As we are all aware members of our faith have spread through out the globe and it is essential for us to hold meetings more often in various parts of the world for an exchange of views and to harmonise our policies in order to attain greater progress and solidarity. Hence we all share a deep gratitude to the organisers of this Congress and I thank all the participants who during the next few days will contribute to discussions of the important topics on the agenda. The potential benefits of such gatherings as this one are boundless and the association of one Zoroastrian with another and one community with another seems to reflect two vital trends occurring in our religion today. Firstly, we in Iran, due in large part to the graciousness of the Pahlavi Dynasty, have been able to come into the open and to show the glorious traditions and heritage of our ancestors not only to our Iranian brothers but also to the world. In this you the Parsee community of India have been our predecessors and guides and the result has been a better understanding of the holy faith amongst other nations and amongst ourselves also than we could have imagined 200 years ago. Secondly, the enlightening teachings of Zoroaster have become known to many people who a few decades ago knew nothing of him or of us and they have in numerous cases been astonished by the purity, integrity, logic and practicability of our religion. Consequently, hearts and minds from throughout the world have been captivated by the holy religion of Ahura Mazda. They have realised that intellectually and morally, the Zoroastrian teachings can meet the needs of today as profoundly as they could 3000 years ago. Modern science has not weakened the principles of Zoroastrianism as pronounced in the Gatha nor have the Copernician view of the solar year, the Darwinian theories of evolution nor the ideas of Freud affected the validity of Zoroaster's philosophy. This gathering is an opportune moment to discuss means and ways to fulfil our needs, dealing with problems and deciding upon the best courses of action in the future. The subjects chosen for discussion are of crucial importance for all of us. We are presently confronting a crisis regarding the future of our priestly class and some solution must be found to alleviate this problem, to uplift their social status, knowledge and general welfare. I myself look forward to offering my ideas on this issue in the coming meetings.

"Also the question of religious education for our children is extremely important for the future of our religion will be in the hands of the younger generations. We must reach some kind of a solution regarding the vital needs for a means of enabling our children to attend a high calibre school and to receive a sound religious education for in this age of technology and lack of enthusiasm for spiritual matters it has become increasingly difficult to bring up our children in the tradition of our religion. We Zoroastrians are highly respected for our industry, integrity, generosity and we must try in the coming days to find a means by which we can increase our prestige to an even higher degree. I am convinced that in the future we must try to be more active and influential in all areas of professional and academic life, particularly the latter. This is related to another aim which are should

pursue whole-heartedly, the economic uplifting of Zoroastrians everywhere. In today's world due to ever increasing technological and intellectual advances people have more interests in common and are being drawn more closely together. Today I believe we have greater opportunities than ever before to work together towards the progress and solidarity of the Zoroastrian community. We must bear in mind that our religion is one in which logic, determination, action and free inquiry prevail and in the coming days we must unite ourselves in accordance with the spirit of our religion and fervently attempt to fulfil the purpose of this gathering."

The Chief Minister of Maharashtra Shri Vasantao Patil spoke in Marathi, but his speech was translated into English and excerpts were read by Mr. Homi Taleyarkhan from the same.

It read :

"I am extremely happy to participate in the World Conference of the Parsee brethren. It is really fortunate for all of us present here that the Hon. Vice President is amidst us this evening as the Chief Guest. Conferences, seminars and gatherings of this kind of the brethren of different religions and communities have indeed a great influence because fellow brothers working in different fields get an opportunity to come together, meet each other, discuss problems concerning social objectives and exchange source and thus try to understand each other. It is in such conferences that we look in retrospect and decide upon the direction of future programme and action. We are holding this 3rd World Conference after 13 years. The intervening period witnessed several social and economic changes. We must change our social objectives and policies so that they take note of and are in harmony with changing times and it is precisely for this specific reason that I feel the subject you have selected for this conference namely 'The place of world communities in the changing world' is apt and significant. The Parsee community in India has rendered yeoman service in the economic, social, educational and political spheres. Your achievements are great although your numbers are small. To adjust to the environment and merge completely with the social stream is really highly commendable quality of your community. The impact of the contribution made by the Parsee community is conspicuously seen in Bombay. The charitable institutions, the dharamsalas, hospitals, the colonies, the scholarships bear ample testimony to the work done by the Parsee community in this city. It is a matter of pride to all of you that have maintained a high tradition and legacy left by the great sons of our country, Dadabhai Naoroji, Phirozeshah Mehta, K. F. Nariman, Dinshaw Vacha, Jamshedji Tata among others. The great work done in recent times by Dr. Homi Bhabha followed now by Dr. Homi Sethna for the use of atomic energy for human welfare and development is monumental and will ever be remembered. You have also left a distinct impression in the sphere of law, commerce and trade, industry, in the armed forces and even in the field of sports. Talking over the past glory does not help us to change and improve the present. The progress of any society essentially depends on the understanding and adjustment with the changing circumstance and environment. It certainly calls for effort,



hard labour persistence and perseverance. As compared to the past the competition of the present is keen. The middle class and low income groups in our communities is increasing in number day by day. They are confronted with the problems of education and housing, and getting a job. I am confident that you give deep thought and sincere thought to these questions in all their different implications and aspects and shall find a way out. I also believe that when you think of the community, you also think of the Indian nation at large because unity in diversity is a special character and speciality of Indian culture. It should be the policy of every community that in trying to solve its own problems it should further the interests of the Indian community. I am quite confident that this conference will bear this point in mind while taking its decisions. I am very grateful to you for having invited me to this conference and giving me the opportunity of meeting you all."

Shri Sadiq Ali, Governor of Maharashtra in his speech said:

"I consider it an honour to be associated in a small way with the 3rd World Zoroastrian Congress. I do not know what exactly are the problems which it proposes to consider but evidently it has some challenges before it. Zoroastrians are small in numbers and are confined to a few countries but they are a vigorous and enlightened community. They have a past and are looking forward to a future which accords with their aspirations. They have a prophet and a book of revelations of great antiquity. But they have also have their modern mind. They could do nothing with the past. The past is fixed and unalterable but the future is very much in their hands. They can shape it as they like. Their greatest asset is their great prophet zoroaster. They drew inspiration from his teachings, his message which was delivered some 3000 years ago. Apart from other matters you will naturally devote a portion of your deliberations to this message. Much of the sacred scriptures in which the message of Zoroaster is embodied is unavailable and has been destroyed but the fragments that remain carry the message that we know. His faith in one God, in the wise lord Ahura Mazda was proclaimed to a people who believed in a multiplicity of gods, crude nature worship and who indulged in many evil and superstitious practices. We all know what it meant faith in one God and what far reaching influences it had on the progress of men. But there was another part of the message which has continued to exercise in the mind of men for all these centuries and millenary, the doctrine of good and evil, the forces of righteousness and unrighteousness, the battle between truth and untruth, darkness and light. Are these two equal and independent and perennial powers or is one subordinate to the other. Is not the omnipotence of God affected after the independent existence of evil or Satan representing evil is recognised. This question has been debated age after age. In Zoroastrianism the wise lord is supreme, sovereign, onnipotent and the good ultimately triumphs. The history of the world is the history of the conflict between these two forces. Another important doctrine of Zoroastrianism is that God has created man free, he is no slave but a free man. He is the master of the freedom to choose between good and evil. Every religion is caught in this controversy of free will versus determinism. Zoroaster upheld freedom of the will and op-

posed fatalism. The Zoroastrian morality is summed up in the famous words good thoughts, good words and good deeds. Moderation is another influential feature of the Zoroastrian ethics. The world is neither a prison nor an exile. Matter is respected. Do in holiness anything you will. Zoroastrianism may have a few followers but what it taught lives on in several religions, in particular Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Zoroaster was one of the greatest religious geniuses of all times, a prophet who believed he spoke to God. God is wholly and completely good.

"Let us now come to the Indian scene. There was no hostility to the Parsee friends when they migrated to India from Iran, in fact they found a warm welcome. Any new faith or doctrine could find a hospitable soil in the country. Here thought was free, so was worship. Truth could be pursued or God could be worshipped in many ways. We all know how you settled and where you settled. You could have been easily lost in the vast population of India but you were not lost. You kept your identity and this shows your strength and your resilience and adaptability. You stood by your religion but you made your mark in many other ways. You identified yourselves with India and its aspirations, the community produced great men in many fields in politics, in art and science, in industry, in education and threw up great fighters for freedom. The great names are on everybody's lips Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Jamshedji Tata, our Bhabha and many others. Some of them were geniuses, giants of men.

"Another remarkable feature of this community's contribution to India's new awakening. They were never a problem when almost every community before independence were thinking in terms of its place in the political scheme of things, the percentage of seats a particular community is entitled to in the legislature or parliament, or its share in the services. It never thought in these terms, somehow it never lacked any self-confidence. Since we have many able and competent people in the Parsee community there is a feeling that the community is affluent and is well able to look after itself and has no problems. That is not so. You have your problems. You have your weaker and poorer sections. You have an under privileged element. In the world of thought you have I believe kept abreast of new movements of thought, of advances in various spheres of life. You have modern minds even though you are attached to a religion which was born before many other religions came on the scene. You may well combine modern knowledge with spirituality. But you have undoubtedly some problems connected with your economic, social and cultural life which you will naturally look to consider so that you can better serve your community and the country. You are eager and anxious to increase your contribution to the growth and progress of India in many fields. The fact that you are numerically small has not and indeed need not depress or frighten you. Ultimately it is quality of life and pursuit of excellence that count. If you have a wide vision, clear heads and stout hearts the world is yours at any rate you have proper and legitimate place in it. You may well keep your identity within a wider loyalty to India and its great goals and aspirations.



India is a free secular democracy in which our constitution and the idealism which you have inherited from India's struggle for freedom and our ancient heritage assures safety to the smallest minority community in the country. For all these and other reasons, all our good will and good wishes are with you as you settle down to your deliberations."

Shri B. D. Jatti, Vice President of India in his speech said:

"I consider it a great pleasure and privilege to be here today to inaugurate the 3rd World Zoroastrian Congress. I thank Mr. Boman Behram, the President of the Federation of Parsee Anjumans, Mr. J. N. Guzder the Chairman of the Executive Committee and Mr. H. Taleyarkhan for this opportunity. Although Parsees number less than a lac in our mother land their impact on our national life has been nothing short of phenomenal. They have distinguished themselves in many and diverse fields of activities. They played a prominent part in fighting for the freedom of the land of their adoption and have made important and significant contribution towards the social and economic development. This small community has produced captains of industry and business magnates who have helped to strengthen our economy. They have established educational institutions, and hospitals and promoted public welfare through a boundless spirit of service and charity according to the highest ideals propounded by Maharshi Zarathushtra nearly thousands of years before Christ. It is well recognised that the multi-dimensional development of the city of Bombay into one of the metropolises of the world is no small measure due to the energy, imagination, vision as well as the pragmatism of the small Parsee community. I hope it will not be regarded as venturesome if I were to endeavour to highlight some of the essentials of the Zoroastrian religion before this august gathering. I do so because I have read a little about this great religion and have the highest regard and admiration for its tenets which has so much in common with the principal religions of the world. Further I think religion and spirituality are central to the life of every Parsee. It is this bond of religion which has lent strength and cohesion to the community through the vicissitudes of centuries. Iran and India have been sharers of our common heritage in the pattern of their religion and culture. Both worshipped the creations of god represented by the sun, the moon, the waters and the winds, etc. Both had a full realisation of God, the father of all who is behind and beyond the phenomenal world. The Aryan ideal expressed in the Veda as *Ruta* had its parallel in the Iranian ideal of *Asha* which was equivalent to *Dharma* which became *Dharma* of Buddhism. But in the first of Indian history the spiritual and social crisis arose which led to the emergence of the great teacher Zarathushtra. Indeed the mission which Zarathushtra was destined to fulfil was nothing less than the redemption of humanity by the reestablishment of spiritual and ethical values.

"Born nearly ten centuries before Christ in a princely house, Spitama who later became Zarathushtra was taught his first lesson in love and devotion to God by his father. In his fifteenth year he retired into solitude renouncing all worldly pleasures, possessions and

desires. For the next fifteen years he lived in meditation and prayer seeking union with God and then Spitamma emerged into the world as Zarathushtra. He of the golden light, refulgent with divine wisdom and heavenly love. His insight into the supreme reality resulted in his proclaiming the doctrine of a religion which upheld monotheism and is rooted in the ethical values of devotion, goodness, purity, compassion, charity and service. Zarathushtra eliminated multiplicity of a divinity by declaring 'There is none besides the creator Ahura Mazda. Everything emanates from Him and merges back in Him at the end.' Ahura Mazda is formless, Nirguna Brahmin, and is to be visualised only through His six attributes. While Zarathushtra helped people to crystallise their faith in one supreme God, he went further and taught them a way of life in the world of men, of being pure and good in thought, word and deed. Zarathushtra guided people towards God through service of humanity. 'He who makes himself a helper of the needy gets the strength of the large.' Those that give shall be given in greater measure and the more we receive the more we can offer others in service and substance. The Rig Veda and the Avasta have a common background. The fire is the symbol of the all pervading light—Jyotesan and Jyoteheen. The high ideals of Zoroastrian faith is reflected in the manner in which the Parsees who came to settle in our land thousands of years ago developed over the centuries. They have shown a pioneering spirit, a progressive outlook and exemplary self-reliance. The manner in which the Zoroastrian community adapted itself to the Indian ethos and merged with the main stream of the Indian national life without losing its identity is indeed unique. They have earned the admiration and affection of all sections of our people and their enterprise and munificence.

"It is hardly necessary for me to mention names and institutions to illustrate the qualities and achievements of the Parsee community. They are many and well known and widely acknowledged. Suffice it to say that the future augurs well for the community. The will, the resources and their expertise are all there in abundant measure to ensure high achievement in all fields but challenges are looming ahead. The world is in a state of flux, manners and modes are changing rapidly, creating what is currently described as the generation gap. There is increasing mobility of youth stimulated partly by unemployment and partly by an urge to seek new experiences and new opportunities in the wider world. There is said to be a considerable Parsee brain drain from our country. There are reports of increasing poverty among the Parsee and more people are seeking doles from Parsee trusts and of the plight of the Parsees living in rural areas. All these point to the fact that while Parsees have been much better off than many other communities they are not wholly free from the problems of unemployment and poverty besetting us. These are problems that face all communities in the world and a certain measure of dynamism is required in handling them. I am sure that both by tradition and training the Parsee community is quite capable of generating the required resources and dynamism to meet the challenge successfully.

"I am happy to note that the theme of this Congress is 'The Zoroastrian community in a changing world.' This is most timely. I



am sure that as a result of your deliberations in which Zoroastrians from all parts of the world will participate, you will not only identify the vital problems facing the community but also consider feasible solutions of the same. I now have my pleasure in inaugurating the 3rd World Zoroastrian Congress. Jaihind. Thank you."

In his vote of thanks Mr. Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan said:

"Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, what a galaxy of leaders we have had the honour to have, headed by no less than the Hon. the Vice President followed by His Excellency the Governor, followed by our popular Chief Minister. What a wealth of enlightened thought has been expressed by them, what a wealth of encouragement and inspiration their thoughts have embraced and embodied for us and what a wealth of humility all their expressions and speeches have indicated of their hearts, of their minds, of their souls, of their spirits. This is truly in the spirit of our faith of good thought, good word, good deed which our three leaders today, who I have the privilege of expressing our deepest sense of gratitude and beholdenness, have manifested today. For all their ideas which you have heard the career of thoughts which have passed through their minds is indeed also an expression of their great confidence we enjoy as the Parsee community of India and as an integral part of India. I am sure I would not be mistaken Mr. Vice President, Mr. Governor, Mr. Chief Minister that we command your confidence because of the historical background dating back to the struggle for freedom when we were tossing between one world which was dead and the other at the moment appeared that it was powerless to be born. When we were perhaps the only community, minority community which never asked for special treatment of any kind, we did not fear nor were afraid of the fact that we were in such microscopic minority that we would be overlooked in our merits, in the recognition of our merits, because we had complete confidence in our leaders of our day as we have them in the leaders of today. That is why Mr. Boman-Behram the distinguished President of the Congress, Mr. Guzder the distinguished Chairman of the Central Committee today rightly stressed that however small our numbers may be we are found everywhere. Largest numbers, the Chief Minister rightly said our home is in India and the largest number in Maharashtra but we are found all over the country. Never have so many been found in so many places of the world and making an impression on the sands of time. And we hope and trust that we will be able to retain this for ever more. It is not only that we are basking in the reflected glory of the past. As again has been mentioned we have also today achievements to our credit which can reflect on the work which we are endeavouring to do in our own way. So I have never been one who has feared that because we are a microscopic community we would suffer on that account, nor have our leaders done so because we know that we have the privilege of their confidence. In all spheres of activities of which references have been made of our representation whether in the government services, or private employ or anywhere. And this an indication of the faith, that because of the power of faith that we have in Lord Zarathushtra because of the fact that our religion perhaps one of the oldest in the world,

as the Governor said, has also a common trend of connection and association with all other religions which have followed. Namely of good thought, good word, good deed which is the fabric and edifice of religion all over the world in the career of centuries which has come.

"Here we have a representation of three of our biggest religions, two of our biggest religions Hinduism in India, Islam and our own religion Zoroastrianism along with so many other religions and perhaps. Sir, we must be the only country in the world which in spite of having so many religions, so many communities, so many languages, so many castes and creeds have shown their stamp of character, of rectitude of character, of unity of purpose and diversity in culture which no one else has ever been able to do so. And in this we are proud to say that Parsees have been a part and parcel of this great effort and endeavour in the building up of our national development and we hope and trust that in future we continue to do so. There are out of 200 countries in the world, over 100 countries which have a population of less than one million, there are 60 countries which have a population less than half a million, there are 38 countries which have a population of the total community of the Parsees that is 1,25,000 and still they all enjoy the importance which their merits deserve.

"So I would consider in conclusion a fitting tribute as Mr. Guzder said in the course of his remarks that there should be constructive outcome of this conference and I would consider the foremost priority requiring to be given to the economic aspect of it namely to try and see how we can improve our economic condition particularly that of housing and from whatever funds we have collected and whatever funds are at the disposal of the Panchayets or the Anjumanas which they can use for the purpose and which we are trying gallantly to do, we should create an edifice today called the 3rd World Zoroastrian Housing Colonies, well in Bombay or anywhere, and that will be a standing monument of the work of this conference, free from any controversies, full of tolerance and of understanding, the spirit which Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru inbred in us and embedded in us. So with these words Sir, the beginning of the conference which you Vice President Jattiji from a village to Vice Presidency which you have risen to, you in your spiritualism, knowing you as I have the honour of doing, a man of the deepest faith, and deepest religion who has considered his abiding faith as the strength of his life, has been recognised by the Nation by being made the second highest citizen of the country. It is an indication of the continuity of humility which Mahatma Gandhi taught us and in that spirit may we hope and trust that the deliberations of the Congress which begin tomorrow God will go with us and give us His blessings."

The proceedings ended with a prayer for the souls of those who had perished in the disaster on the night of the New Year and the National Anthem sung by the students of the Sir J.J.P.B. Institution (Girls).

The Hall was filled to capacity and extra chairs had to be provided in the aisles and the side corridors.



## Congress Proceedings

Thursday 5-1-1978 : Morning Session

## TOPIC NO. 1

PAPER : THE PRIESTLY CLASS —  
ITS PRESENT CONDITION AND FUTURE UPLIFT.

- 9.00 to 10.30 A.M. — Chairman — Mr. B. H. Antia.  
 Rapporteur — Ervad Godrej Sidhwa  
 (from Karachi).  
 Paper Reader — 1. Ervad Peshotan Peer.  
 2. Mr. Peshotan D. Nargolwala.  
 3. Dr. Buzarjmehr Mehr.

10.30 to 11.00 A.M. — Coffee Break.

11.00 to 12.30 P.M. — Workshop.

The Chairman, Mr. Burjor Antia, opened the Session with appropriate remarks, while welcoming the delegates. Religion, he said, was a potent force that regulated the history of mankind and that was shaped by a wise group of people called Athornans. In the past we had great Dasturjis like Arda Viraf, Aderbad Maraspand, Neriosang Dhaval, Meherji Rana and others. It was with a view to uplifting the present class of Athornans that learned scholars had agreed to put forward their views and offer their suggestions. He then called upon the scholars to read their papers.

1. ERVAD PASHOTAN PEER\* in his paper deploring the dwindling number of Mobeds stated that in the year 1874 there were 865 Priests with a population of 48,000 Parsis in Bombay whereas now, there were about 250 Priests with a population of 65,000 Parsis resident in Bombay and about 350 to 400 Priests in the whole of India. Referring to the establishment of the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute at Andheri Ervad Peer stated that for the first two decades a large number of trained Priests came from the Madressa, but between 1955 and 1975 the Institute produced only seven to eight qualified priests every year and hardly a few of them have adopted the priestly vocation. Eventually the older generation of yojdathregars died out and today there are hardly 65 yojdathregars in the whole of India. With the spread of education and Athornan Madressa students being allowed to take up college education, the would-be priests preferred to seek their bread elsewhere rather than in priesthood. To attract future Mobeds he suggested schemes for the betterment of the class, namely, a central fund, raising of various ceremony rates, tringe benefits like provident fund, and medical and educational help. He also suggested contribution by every Zoroastrian family of at least Rs. 50/- a year for the Central Fund.

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ERVAD PESHOTAN F. PEER, M.A.

\* A practising priest of Bombay. Obtained M.A. Degree in Avesta Pahlavi. Head Priest of Tata Agiary, Bandra. A Scholar of Avesta Pahlavi.

Ervad Peer referred to a scheme of the Cama Athornan Madressa whereby Rs. 100/- are deposited in a Bank in the joint names of the boy and the Trustee as he is admitted. Rs. 100/- are then deposited every month and after seven years when the boy leaves the Madressa the amount accumulates to Rs. 10,000/-. Thereafter the boy is required to work as a Priest for 15 years, at the end of which he will get Rs. 54,000/-. He wanted the community to accept the problem of dwindling priestly class as challenge and to rise to the occasion as one man.

2. MR. PESHOTAN NARGOLWALA\* in his paper also referred to the Cama Athornan Scheme whereby a student on passing out as a Mobed and working for another 15 years as a Priest would get Rs. 54,000/-, which would earn for him an interest of Rs. 500/- per month from his investments in addition to his professional income of Rs. 400/- to 500/- per month. He added that the total number of pupils at the Cama Athornan Institute was 14 including 4 pupils in the 9th and 10th Standards, to whom the old S.S.C. curriculum still applied. He expressed a doubt if a Cama Athornan Institute would be able to produce scholars as the Scheme was Mobedi-oriented.

As to the declining number of Mobeds Mr. Nargolwala stated that according to historical records there were as many as 5000 Mobeds in Bombay 'centuries ago' for a Parsi population of '50,000' and today the number of Mobeds in Bombay stood around '300' for a Parsi population of '60,000'. On an all India basis he computed it to be about 400. He felt by 2000 A.D. the number would be reduced to 150. He attributed the fall in number to the following:

- 1) Families had dwindled in numbers in all strata of society including the Mobeds.
- 2) For economic and social reasons a number of Mobeds remain bachelors. The general complaint is that girls are reluctant to marry Mobeds, whose life-style at home is full of drudgery.
- 3) The sons of Mobeds take to more lucrative and stable professions.
- 4) The younger generation of Mobeds is reluctant to accept the strict discipline and rigours of life required by the Yozdathregars.
- 5) The Mobed feels that the Behdin is not prepared to give him a fair deal.

Mr. Nargolwala computed that whereas there should be at least six mobeds coming into profession every year on an average the present situation was that in the last 20 years not more than two Mobeds had been produced. If the Cama Athornan Institute could produce under its Scheme two Mobeds a year, the Dadar Athornan Madressa according to him should produce at least four Mobeds a year. Mr. Nargolwala pointed out that in his calculation a floating population of 200 or more part-time Mobeds in Bombay and other towns was taken into consideration.

#### MR. PESHOTAN D. NARGOLWALA

\* Holds a Master's Degree in Chemical Engineering from the U.S.A. Worked in Tatas as the Chief Technical Executive of Tata Chemicals Ltd. and, later, as Technical Adviser in Tata Services Ltd. He is a keen social worker in the field of employment, career guidance and amelioration of the conditions of Parsi Priests. He worked as the Jt. Hon. Secretary of the 3rd World Zoroastrian Congress.



The scarcity of Mobeds, Mr. Nargolwala felt, would in course of time affect the maintenance of Agiaries and Atash Behrams and he felt that a merger of some of the Agiaries would have to be considered. He, however, stated that he was not saying so with a view to create alarm, but with the sole purpose that the community prepare from now to face the situation in an orderly manner.

Mr. Nargolwala did not concur with some of the recommendations made in the past which were not satisfying to all concerned. He recommended that 1) there should be maintenance of complete statistics of Mobeds, 2) a study of funds donated in the past for Mobed's welfare should be made, 3) there should be a Central Fund, 4) there should be religious classes, 5) fees for various ceremonies should be reviewed every three years by a Committee, 6) there should be a merger of Agiaries that are non-viable, 7) Panthaki system should be modified, 8) the two Madressas should combine with a view to produce Mobeds, 9) there should be free medical aid and education, 10) five to ten flat allotments should be made to the Mobed families whenever allotments are made, 11) a grant of Rs. 10,000/- should be given to every full-time Mobed for getting married, 12) to meet Mobed requirements outside India there should be a liaison between Zoroastrian Associations of Iran, U.K., U.S.A. and other countries and priests sent as teachers and preachers, to which end their education should be oriented.

3. DR. BUZARJMEHR MEHR\* felt that a priest should not only carry out rituals but should also be an educator for which he should be remunerated well. He also felt that the younger generation should be taught to respect priests. He spoke with some satisfaction when he said that some educated young Indian Zoroastrians who are now working in Iran in various fields and who are descended from the priestly class, help in performing Jashans, initiation ceremonies, marriages, ceremonies for the dead and conducting religious lectures for the young and the old. All this they do after their daily work and on holidays. In order to allow the cultural heritage of the Zoroastrians to continue it should be transmitted from generation to generation, and he asked scholars, theologians and priests to come together to produce adequate literature in the language known to the young generation. Translations alone are not adequate and there should be explanations if the cultural heritage is to be assimilated and the performance of religious practice is to be made a part of day-to-day life.

#### **WORKSHOP: (11.00 to 12.30 P.M.)**

The following points were made in the discussion :

1) In ancient Iran the Fire Temple was not merely a Fire Temple and the priest was not merely a priest but also a professor of sciences, a surgeon, a physician, an astrologer, and a counsellor during war and peace. 2) There is a split in the Athornan community on carrying out ceremonies of a certain nature and in order to bring about a rapprochement there should be a sanctioning authority or enforcing authority which could be the Federation of the Parsi

#### **DR. BUZARJMEHR MEHR**

\* A leading physician of Tehran. Represented the Zoroastrian community of Iran in the Iranian Parliament. He is the President of the Zoroastrian Anjuman of Tehran. A keen social worker devoted to the welfare of the Zoroastrian community in Tehran; he has intimate knowledge of the problems pertaining to Mobeds and their profession in Iran.

Anjumans. 3) The Mobeds should be taught some craft so that in their spare time they could supplement their income and maintain their self-respect. 4) The Central Fund will not help much. Athornans themselves should come forward to help themselves. 5) There should be faith in our religious ceremonies with their mystic effect. 6) A delegate offered to give Rs. 10,000/- to a priest to get married provided he were prepared to remain a priest and further, if he were prepared to go to Iran the amount would be doubled. 7) There should be a minimum wage for all Mobeds which should not vary from Agiary to Agiary and from Atash Behram to Atash Behram. 8) To make an extra penny during their leisure hours the Mobeds could take advantage of loan-giving agencies of government. 9) Mobeds should be given bonuses and free housing. 10) Part-time priesthood should be encouraged. 11) Some foreign Universities should be requested to set-up a department for post-graduate course for teaching Avesta. 12) If the Mobeds have a union they could get equal rights and equal payment without any difference between the Panthaki and the Mobed. 13) The problem seems to be partly a management problem and partly management of emotions, since religion is losing its hold all over the world. 14) The M. F. Cama Athornan Institute has made an appeal to some trust funds to donate to a Central Fund, which it is trying to collect. 15) The priestly class should be enlightened and learned and instead of taking up handicrafts and some such thing in their spare time they should devote their time to research. 16) When Mobeds perform ceremonies the laity notice that they have no faith nor devotion for the work they are carrying out. 17) The two Madressas need not be combined as the result would be drastic. 18) Three types of Athornans are required, namely, scholarly type, teachers and preachers and humble ones who can perform ceremonies with faith and devotion. 19) Instead of creating funds the rates for the work that the Mobeds do should be raised. 20) There are only two problems — one the paucity of priests and the second their economic condition. 21) In the last 20 years the Athornan Madressa has produced as many as 125 priestly boys with full-fledged training, but out of these hardly 15 to 20 are tending to Fire Temples. Thus Rs. 20,000/-, spent on producing one Mobed, who does not take to the profession, go to waste and so do millions of rupees on several of them.

#### Summary as presented in the Concluding Session :

1. Unless the spiritual needs of the Community are satisfied, the survival of the Community itself will become a fatal situation for the morrow. Therefore, let our watchword be "No Priest, No Parsis". It is recommended that the existing Funds with the Anjumans and Panchayets should be studied from the angle of their being utilised for Mobed welfare. To preserve the priestly class and to improve its condition, faith in purity and virtue, faith in efficiency of prayers and ceremonies should be revived in the hearts of both the priests and the Behdins. To motivate faith in our religion, the existing religious classes should be revitalised and new religious classes should be established.
2. In the past, much has been spoken and suggested for the uplift of the priests but nothing has been done. Now is the time to set a time-bound programme and to produce results.
3. The problems of the priests, their existence, maintenance and continuation is to be treated as the problem of the whole community and not the problem of an individual priest family.



The Community should —

4. Make our priests free from worldly needs.  
It should provide them and their children free residential accommodation, free education, free medical aid, insurance, provident fund, pension and other benefits. An ad hoc grant of Rs. 10,000/- for every Mobed desiring matrimony is recommended.
5. Fix remuneration of the different ceremonies which the priests perform so that they may have a decent standard of life.
6. Entrust the work of amelioration of our priests to a Central Organisation. Such an Organisation should be an Institution established prior to 1961 so that donations to such institutions do not attract income-tax. Individuals or charitable organisations are requested to donate to this Central Organisation.
7. Merge financially and organisationally weaker fire temples with better organised fire temples to avoid sudden closure of or interruption in their functioning.
8. Maintain with the Central Organisation a record of priests, their names, addresses, qualifications, categories, financial position, etc., so that the Community may know the problems of the priestly class and take remedial steps.
9. Revive and revitalize our Madressas so that they can fulfil the needs of the Zoroastrians by providing :
  - (a) Yozdathregar priests,
  - (b) teachers and preachers who can effectively conduct the classes to impart religious knowledge not only for the children, but also for grownups,
  - (c) and last, but not the least, Scholars should do research work on Zoroastrian philosophy and stand in comparison with the priests of the other Communities.

In other words, what we want are qualified learned and enlightened priests with missionary zeal to spread the message of Zarathushtra.
10. Our ceremonies and rituals should be simple and less expensive than today and the Central Organisation should lay down the guidelines for the same. Generalised mass prayers during auspicious occasions and Muktd should be encouraged.
11. Voluntary, honorary and part-time priests should be encouraged to work as priests apart from attending to their full-time occupations.

## Afternoon Session

## TOPIC NO. III

PAPER : RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR THE YOUNGER  
GENERATIONS OF ZOROASTRIANS IN INDIA

2.00 to 3.30 P.M. — Chairman	— Dastur N. D. Minocher-Homji
Rapporteur	— Dr. (Miss) Mehroo D. Bengalee
Paper Readers	— 1. Dr. H. B. Dhalla 2. Dr. (Mrs.) Avan G. Billimoria 3. Mr. Aspi Moddie 4. Mrs. P. M. Jungalwalla
3.30 to 4.00 P.M. — Coffee Break	
4.00 to 5.30 P.M. — Workshop	
7.00 P.M. Entertainment:	
Parsi Operetta	— Birla Matushri Sabhagar.

Dastur Minocher-Homji, the Chairman, began the Session with a prayer from Avesta and Sanskrit and then called upon the speakers to read their papers.

1. DR. HOMI DHALLA\* started his paper with the misgiving as to whether religious instruction could be assumed complacently to continue undisturbed its tradition as in the last 125 years. The disturbing factors according to him were personal, national and international, but not the least the age we were living in — the maelstrom of scepticism. He traced the rise of scepticism through the ages and referred to the need for religion based on secularism as propounded in the Constitution of India. There were religious instruction classes for boys and girls already in existence in 1852 according to a Circular of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and this was continued by successive Punchayet Trustees in Bombay and several towns of Gujarat. In Bombay religious education to Parsi students was being given in some six Parsi-managed schools, like Byramjee Jejeebhoy Parsi Charitable Institution, Lady Engineer High School, Bai Maneckbai N. Gamadia Girls' High School, Bai Bhikhaji Shapurji Bengallee Girls' High School, Sir Jamshetjee Jejeebhoy Fort Boys' High School, and Sir Jamshetjee Jejeebhoy Fort Girls' High School.

Referring to the mechanics of education Dr. Dhalla felt that senior students could be motivated into examining the reasons for belief, if the teacher could present valid ones and this would enable the student to form his own convictions and acquire values. Children must be used to asking questions, discussing points and even just throwing out ideas. He emphasised the necessity of religious teaching by audio-visual and graphic methods. Senior students should be en-

## DR. HOMI B. DHALLA

\* Having graduated from the University of Bombay, went to Harvard where he obtained his Master's degree. Subsequently, obtained his doctorate in Avesta-Pahlavi from the University of Bombay. Currently, carrying out research work at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute.



couraged to participate in groups such as a reading circle during vacations, trips to places of pilgrimage and places of historical interest. He emphasised the role of the teacher, the parents and the priests. Dr. Dhalla concluded that religious education imparted in the true spirit is vital to the health of the nation. But it should be something more virile than a benevolent humanism. He suggested making of films on socio-religious schemes for circulation among Parsi schools and colonies.

2. DR. AVAN GODREJ BILLIMORIA\* thought that in the Zoroastrian community of today religious education of children is left mostly to chance. There are no guide lines for parents or teachers. The task of educating our children in the ways of religion is a formidable one. The most important need is to acquire objective and factual knowledge about our history, doctrines and observances by the adult generation and dissemination of this knowledge to the young formative minds. Questioning whether religious classes are the answer Dr. (Miss) Billimoria felt that looking to the present condition of knowledge a formal religious school is a possible alternative. Guidelines could be set up by a panel of scholars and educators for training up teachers for such religious schools. In the Chicago metropolitan area, from where she came as a delegate, there is a three-pronged approach :

- 1) Monthly adult education series.
- 2) Performance of ceremonies and rituals such as Jashans, Muktd, Ghambars, etc. and
- 3) Religious instruction classes for children.

Questioning whether Avestan prayers should be in modern translated languages Dr. (Mrs.) Billimoria said that prayer has been described as the regarding of today in relation to Eternity. The performance of ceremonies and chanting of hymns without understanding their meaning is often rejected by the younger generation as being dogmatic. They want to know the 'whys' and 'wherefors' of rituals. The middle-path would be to interpret Zoroastrian teaching in a meaningful way.

3. MR. ASPI MODDIE\* started his paper with certain basic propositions (1) that the community and particularly the young have the problem of living with change meaningfully, (2) that seeing and understanding meaningfully should be through the eyes and minds of the young who represent the future, (3) that the leaders of the community, in their different groups in different parts of the

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#### DR. (MRS.) AVAN G. BILLIMORIA

\* Dr. (Mrs.) Billimoria, a Parsee Zoroastrian, was formerly a resident of Bombay, where she obtained the M.A. degree from the University of Bombay. Later, emigrated to the U.S.A. where she obtained her doctorate from the Illinois Institute of Psychology. Currently, Professor of Psychology at University of Illinois. Helps young Zoroastrians in Chicago to better understand their religion by running religious educational classes there.

#### MR. A. D. MODDIE

\* Served in the Indian Army as an Officer in World War II. Subsequently, joined the Indian Administrative Service. Later, joined Hindustan Lever Ltd. and became a Member of the Board of Directors later on. On retirement, now practices as a Management Consultant in Delhi.

world, cannot afford to confront the problems of change with a rigid change and no-change dichotomy, (4) that the fundamental educational problem of the Zoroastrian child is a) drying up of cultural and religious roots, b) its identity and involvement in a microscopic community spread all over the world and c) the absence of a clear perception of a body of living values, (5) that the problem of pre-school education is squarely the responsibility of the parents, priests and local punchayets.

The richest community in South Asia in per capita terms, namely, the Parsi Zoroastrians, has practically no research-based knowledge about their contemporary condition. Interpretations of the Zoroastrian religion and culture which exist are in archaic idiom and context which are not meaningful to the young generation of today. A child needs to understand the teaching of good thought, word and deed through their meaningfulness in history, legend and contemporary living. Avesta and the Rig Veda were the works of the simple societies living close to nature's elements and seeing supernatural forces in those elements. This could be explained in a more rational way with relevance to modern environment and to all this, knowledgeable and imaginative writers and creative people should be commissioned to interpret, produce and publish the requisite material.

4. DR. (MRS.) P. N. JUNGALWALLA\* felt that secular studies had taken on such enormous dimensions that religious education was relegated to an after-thought. To integrate our children in their faith so as to compare and contrast the teachings of Zarathushtra with those of other prophets and seers, we need not only to have good teachers but also a graded series of religious text books for all ages. There is a great dearth of children's books on our religion. There must be a modernistic approach in the teaching of our children and full use should be made of modern media. Great care should be taken not to indulge in misleading translations, and persistent distortions should be pointed out to all young people.

#### **WORKSHOP: (4.00 to 5.30 P.M.)**

The discussionists brought out the desirability of having good literature for training teachers and adults and the necessity of sending out lecturers to explain religious tenets in out-of-the-way and far-off-places.

A book on catechism was emphasised.

One of the parents from abroad, who had married a non-Parsi and whose wife wanted the children to be given instruction in Zoroastrianism, said he was at a loss as he did not have enough literature on hand.

Someone suggested that a community like the Parsis, rich in heritage and money, was very poor in publicity and propaganda.

#### **MRS. PILOO NANAVUTTY-JUNGALWALLA**

\* Piloo Nanavutty (Mrs. P. N. Jungalwalla) graduated from Girton College, Cambridge University. She lectured at the Universities of Bombay and Delhi for twelve years and was Principal of the Janki Devi College, Delhi, from 1960 to 1966. Her published works include "The Kusti Prayers and their Exposition" (1943), "Songs of Zarathushtra" (1952), "Fravarane" (1959) and "Zarathushtra" (1968). She is currently engaged in translating into English portions of the "Khordeh Avesta," the book of daily prayers of the Parsis.



A suggestion was made that women would make better teachers than Mobeds.

The papers brought out the urgent need, which had arisen due to (1) dispersal of Zoroastrians all over the world which has resulted in the loosening of contacts and difficulty of answering some relevant questions posed by the young who are growing up in the diverse cultures and communities, (2) Zoroastrians find themselves falling behind times and getting outdated in ever-changing moral and religious values, and (3) with secularism being accepted in our country, there is no formal religious education for our children and it is left to chance.

All the speakers emphasised the imparting of religious education through modern media like T.V., Radio, Movie, Audio-visual apparatus and a lot of illustrative literature, both instructive and entertaining.

While there was some difference of opinion between speakers as to who should do the teaching, some felt the priests should do so and some wanted trained teachers. But they were all agreed about the role of the parents.

While the children were willing, intelligent, and enthusiastic and showed concern about religion, the feeling was that they did not have sufficient number of well-trained teachers. Religion is caught and not taught and, therefore, parents must create such an environment in the home. No priests should accept to perform the marriage ceremony until it is understood by the couple and what their commitments would be to their community and religion and obligations to their children. A young delegate suggested that there should be more opportunities for the young to have regular meetings for religious instruction with social and recreational activities to attract modern teenagers.

Summary as presented in the concluding Session:

1. We must plan ahead, organise and plunge into action. There is no dearth of funds, personnel, talents and selfless volunteers. If at all there is any dearth it is of patient and tolerant people, possessing insight, foresight and far-sight in dealing with our community problems.
2. We should direct our activities initially in the Parsi colonies and help them to form committees of scholars, teachers, parents and young people and to start religious activities or instruction according to their needs and conveniences.
3. Parents should be prepared for religious guidance, teachers for religious instruction, scholars and scientists for research work and priests for indepth knowledge of religious rites and dogmas.
4. There is a very vital need for a Child Guidance Clinic and a Marriage Guidance Bureau at the Parsi General Hospital and in Colonies respectively, to help children and adults to resolve their very personal problems. Trained psychiatrists, counsellors and psychologists will be readily available.

Friday 6-1-1978 : Morning Session

# TOPIC NO. IV

## PAPER : THE PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION OF ZOROASTRIANS IN THE PRESENT SET-UP.

9.00 to 10.30 A.M.	— Chairman	— Mrs. Gulestan R. Billimoria
	Rapporteur	— Mr. B. S. H. Rustomjee
	Paper Readers	— 1. Dr. H. N. Sethna
		— 2. Dr. (Miss) Aloo Dastur.
10.30 to 11.00 A.M.	— Coffee Break	
11.00 to 12.30 P.M.	— Workshop	

Mrs. Gulestan R. Billimoria, the Chairman stated at the outset that she would reserve her remarks and request the speakers to deliver their papers.

1. DR. HOMI SETHNA\* in his short speech ably brought out the value of technical training and education in the fields of science. In the early days when there was not enough education in the other communities our graduates got jobs easily. But now the situation is different. The present standard of education and examination has so deteriorated that the number of first and second class graduates far outnumber the pass class graduates and in these circumstances our graduates find it difficult to find jobs. According to him we have set our goals wrongly, we have become lazy and we have lost our emphasis on dignity of labour. College education is not for everybody. We should not waste effort and moneys of charitable trusts for pushing a child through College. Our forefathers made a name for themselves as master craftsmen. Parsi carpenters, ship-builders were famous. Today it is next to impossible to find a Parsi carpenter or an electrician or a machinist, when it is possible for such craftsmen to earn more than a graduate who has fewer openings. It is a sad commentary on our very narrow outlook to education, because of which Parsi institutions giving vocational trainings had to close down. He said he was referring to the Gamadia Polytechnic in Bombay and the Parekh Polytechnic in Surat, which used to give excellent training in several trades and had pro-

### DR. HOMI NUSSERWANJI SETHNA

B.Sc., B.Sc. (Tech) (Bombay), M.S.E. (Michigan)  
F.A.Sc., F.N.A., F.I.E., D.Sc.

\* Dr. Sethna is the recipient of many honorary D.Sc. degrees and innumerable honours have been conferred upon him, both in India and abroad, for his original contributions in the field of Science. He was awarded the "Padma Shri" in 1959. The "Padma Bhushan" in 1966 and the "Padma Vibhushan" in 1975.

He has been a member of the Governing Council of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research since 1972 and Chairman of the Tata Memorial Centre, Bombay consisting of the Tata Memorial Hospital and Cancer Research Institute. He is a Fellow of the Indian National Science Academy and a Life Member of the Indian Academy of Sciences and also of the Institution of Engineers (India).

At present, he is Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Atomic Energy and Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission.



duced good craftsmen. He exhorted the community to think why and how it happened.

In the past we had greatly contributed to agriculture and horticulture. We lost it all out of laziness—too much reliance on toddy business and 'ganot' and too little reliance on ourselves. He believed that it was necessary that the Golvad and Navsari Rural Homes should be biased towards agriculture and rural culture rather than towards an urban culture. Farmers have been given much protection and financial benefits and incentives by government but they have ignored them.

We have failed to establish rapport at the political and social level. Our educational policies are to blame for that.

Our country has grown tremendously in the industrial sector, both large and small scale, and therefore there is a fantastic scope for new industries. Dr. Sethna urged science and engineering graduates who have gone abroad to seriously consider the very bright prospects in the country to utilise their expertise and managerial and entrepreneurial skills for the development of our country.

A pitiful number of boys are going in for science and engineering, said Dr. Sethna. We need a number of scientists and engineers. Dr. Sethna could not help but mention that our girls as a rule had done much better in scholastic endeavour than the boys. A similar situation prevailed in medical and other life sciences.

In conclusion Dr. Sethna stressed that our educational programme and strategies should be such as to (a) bring us and keep us in the mainstream of social and political life in the country; (b) enable us to utilise the wide ranging of talent in the community; (c) selectively channelise the gifted students to special institutions which trusts can establish; (d) up date our charity schools so that they can provide the best education; (e) provide ample opportunities to rural children to acquire skills in agriculture, horticulture, etc., which would harmonise them for life in the rural environment; (f) provide guidance in respect of newer emerging areas of science and technology; (g) finally, make them into human beings, sensitive to the happenings in and around into their surroundings.

2. DR. (MISS) DASTUR stated that formerly the Parsi Schools used to admit only Parsi children but since the Government Order of 1953 most of the schools have been thrown open to all communities, which step has benefitted our children as they have to be more alert in scholarly pursuits due to keen competition from other non-Parsi children. From her personal experience she stated that standards of teaching, especially in girls schools, have improved. Following modern trends in education put forth in Europe and America, our schools, too bend towards non-religious education with emphasis on ethics and universal truths rather than religious tenets. A modern state seeks to equalise the opportunity for education to all its people irrespective of status in life or wealth. There are winds of change which will not allow the hiatus between the haves and have-nots. The study of religious tenets and their significance is the domestic or group obligation. Modern educational system should keep religion and religious practices out of school curriculum.

Parsis are somehow loath to use their hands and prefer white collar jobs. Education is to make individuals more useful members of society. One of the best ways is to get children familiar with their environment. In view of this Miss Dastur felt that Zoroastrian children could not have a ready-made design of education being Zoroastrian. They would have to fall in line with the design provided by the valid social milieu in which they reside. Education must enable every individual to find his best self.

**WORKSHOP: (11.00 to 12.30 P.M.)**

In the discussion that followed the pros and cons of technical education were considered. One participant pointed out that the boys out of the Poona Orphanage had to compete with inter-science students for entering into an engineering college as the latter had a better grasp of mathematics and science subjects. Dr. Sethna pointed out that he was talking about a technical school which train people at the technician level, that is persons who could work with their hands. A technical-biased school is a school which prepares students for entry into a university for engineering degree.

One of the participants firmly believed that if there was any crisis in the community it was the crisis of character.

The principal of a boarding school stated that actually education is preparation for life and he felt that the present education was in the hands of five 'laks'. They are 'Palak' the parent, 'Malak' the governing body, 'Chalak' the principal and teachers, 'Sanchalak' the director of education, and 'Balak' the child, the last one being mostly forgotten.

One of the participants stated that with the same amount of expenditure which we incur on foreign education we could have double or treble the number being educated and trained in India.

An Iranian delegate pointed out that they did not leave everything to the Anjumans. But there were different organisations which looked after the requirements of different types of people insofar as their education is concerned.

One of the participants, a Professor, disagreed with Dr. Sethna and said that our boys were not lazy. Given the opportunity they could show themselves. According to him our examination system and curriculum of education were at fault.

Another Professor showed with statistics that quite an appreciable number of boys and girls went in for scientific, medical, engineering and technical education.

One of the participants suggested that the community should keep track of foreign returned students and absorbed them in various places and, if settled abroad, show them openings for employment on their return home.

Someone suggested a leadership course for the youth.

Another person stated that counselling of parents was more important than the counselling of children. We should have some kind of supporting system whereby intelligent and clever boys, who can go ahead in professions, are picked out.



One of the participants pointed out that during the whole talk and discussion not a word was said about the physical education which was very important.

Summary as presented in the concluding Session:

1. The problems of education are complex. The survival of the community depends upon its adjustment to the changing socio-economic, political, cultural and linguistic policies of the state. While adopting national languages, the importance of the English language should not be overlooked. The imparting of Zoroastrian religion should be the responsibility of the family and of community centres.

2. With the democratisation of education and consequent competition from sister communities, youth should not expect protectionism. Our goals must be clarified and values re-adjusted. The dignity of hand work and hard work need be stressed. We should discourage youths from expecting easy and cushy jobs in urban centres. Instead they should seek new pastures in rural areas.

3. Higher collegiate education should be more selective and based on talent and ability. There is need for technical and employment-oriented education. It is necessary to cash in on new industrial projects outside Bombay and thus avoid concentration in the city.

4. Diversified education to suit each age and sex group should be considered. The value of pre-school education, utilising all the faculties of the child during its developmental period and the importance of 'the hand' in education at all levels of development was emphasised.

5. Talented children should be discovered early in life and facilities provided for the expansion of their personalities both in urban and in rural settings. The needs of rural areas requiring specialised skills and know-how must be taken into consideration.

6. There are advantages and disadvantages of living in communal colonies, of urbanisation and of co-education. There is need for right leadership and for leadership and teacher-training programmes. It is of importance to educate fathers and mothers and also afford physical education.

7. A directory of Parsi-managed educational institutions and Parsi educators should be formed.

8. Funds are available for all educational projects but more dynamic action programmes and wider and better publicity, in consonance with changing industrial and scientific opportunities based on inter-disciplinary studies and research are needed.

9. Education for life should be the guiding principle, enabling every individual to discover his highest self, not only through his intellect and skills but also through the realisation of moral and ethical values as laid down in the Zoroastrian faith. The focus should be on producing socially useful individuals with an awareness and a willingness to do their duty and fulfil their obligations, to the community and the country in which they live.

## Afternoon Session

## TOPIC No. V

PAPER : SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SURVEY OF  
ZOROASTRIANS IN THE RECENT PAST  
AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE.

1.30 to 3.30 P.M.	— Chairman	— Prof. N. A. Modi
	Rapporteur	— Prof. K. C. Sheriar
	Paper Readers	— 1. Dr. Farhang Mehr 2. Dr. Lovji Cama 3. Mr. S. F. Desai 4. Mr. S. D. Nargolwala 5. Mr. Manoucher Mobaraki 6. Mr. R. S. Gae 7. Mr. B. H. Antia.
3.30 to 4.00 P.M.	— Coffee Break	
4.00 to 5.30 P.M.	— Workshop	
7.30 P.M.	— Audio Visual Cultural — cum — Fashion Show and Contributory Dinner — Cooperage.	

Prof. Nader Modi informed the audience that the speakers' views were their own and not of the organisers. He himself was not in agreement with all the views but like Voltaire while fighting for his own views he would fight for the other man's point of view. He suggested we could disagree without being disagreeable. He then called upon the first speaker to read his paper.

1. DR. FARHANG MEHR\* chose to call his paper — 'Modernisation in Zoroastrianism'. By modernisation he clarified that he did not advocate changing, modifying or altering of religion, for that would be a reform. He was sure that intellectually and morally the Zoroastrian teachings could meet the needs of today as powerfully as they could 3,000 years ago. In his opinion modern science had not weakened the principles of Zoroastrianism as pronounced in the Gathas. By the term 'modernisation' he referred to the revision, first of some of the rituals and secondly reconsideration of misinterpretations of Zoroastrian principles. He was against total abolition of rituals since they served a good purpose, lending colour, charm, strength and sincerity to prayers. He had in mind for 'modernisation' those rituals which were alien in nature to Zoroastrianism. With regard to misinterpretations he wanted the audience to bear in mind that in Zoroastrianism the spirit of reasoning and free inquiry prevailed as emphasised by Zarathushtra in the Gathas.

## DR. FARHANG MEHR

\* Chancellor of the Pahlavi University at Shiraz. Former Assistant Prime Minister of Iran. Among the other offices held by him, was Deputy Director of Finance of the Government of Iran, Director-General of Petroleum Affairs, and a representative of Iran on OPEC and Chairman-cum-M.D. of Bimch Iran. He is the author of many books and a very active figure in the life of the Zoroastrian community in Iran.



Dr. Farhang Mehr then raised a few questions. The first question referred to children of mixed marriages. Where the father was a Zoroastrian the child was accepted as Zoroastrian, but where the father was a non-Zoroastrian and the mother Zoroastrian the same right was not granted to the child. He asked if that was not a curious anomaly. He thought it was a direct contradiction of the teachings of Zarathushtra, who laid stress over and over again on the equality of man and woman in every sphere of life. He, however, pointed out that the community should not encourage mixed marriages. But when it becomes fait accompli we should be consistent and rational in our approach.

Dr. Mehr's second question referred to conversion. He asked if there were anything in the Gathas, the Younger Avesta, the Pahlevi scriptures, Pazand writings and in recent rivayats which forbade conversion. If the prohibition arose merely from racial and biological consideration then he asked the scientist if the argument stood to reason and empirical knowledge. He, however, sounded a note of warning that he was against the policy of free entry to all into the community. He saw no reason why a worthy person, whose knowledge, maturity and dignity were above question, should not be admitted.

His third question referred to the shortage of priestly class. He wanted to know why in view of this, the Behdins should not be allowed to officiate as priests.

His fourth and final question referred to the disposal of the dead. He inquired if he was right in assuming that any method was acceptable provided it was practicable in the circumstances and could be accomplished in a manner without contaminating the environment and the elements perhaps in the least possible manner.

Dr. Mehr expected well-documented answers from the scholars to give a thought to the questions raised by him.

2. DR. LOVJI CAMA\* spoke on the Social and Cultural Survey of Zoroastrians in North America and a look into their future. According to him there were about 4000 Zoroastrians in North America (U.S.A. & Canada) including children. 20% of the marriages are mixed marriages and the ratio of men and women marrying out of the fold is almost 2:1. He, however, stated that the Zoroastrian community in North America was dynamic and wanted to retain its identity and survive. Wherever there be 100 or more Zoroastrians they try and come together and organise themselves into associations. 15% of the adult population consisted of single persons and the child quantum per couple was on an average 1.25.

According to Dr. Cama the rituals and ceremonies acted as a binding force for a religion. But then he felt the necessity of curtailing some of the lengthy rituals for want of proper officiators, although for the present, some Zoroastrians belonging to the priestly class officiated as free priests while serving elsewhere.

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#### DR. LOVJI CAMA

\* Obtained his doctorate in Organic Chemistry from the University of Columbia, New York. Research Fellow in the Research Department of Messrs. Merck, Sharp and Dohme. He is one of the founder members of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York and was its first Secretary. Currently, Vice-President of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York. Author of several articles on the Zoroastrian religion.

He felt that some mobed families had migrated to North America and if they send their son or sons to India for being ordained as priests and return to America there was some hope of continuity for the next generation. Otherwise the second filial generation, that lived in a different environment and atmosphere would tend to have diminishing faith.

Dr. Cama referred to certain social and religious trends. While he felt that the present generation took full interest in religion, and social and cultural activities, he was not sure whether in American environment there would not be a certain change. The non-Zoroastrian spouses did not feel alienated from the community. On the contrary they helped promote Zoroastrianism. But he advocated a formal acceptance of the non-Zoroastrian spouses into the religion at a future date, similarly as on a social level. He summarised the characteristics of the North American Zoroastrians as follows :

- 1) Zoroastrians in North America will emphasise the ethics and philosophy of their religion more than the rituals and ceremonies.
- 2) The simple prayers and ceremonies will remain as they are but will be better understood. Many longer and complicated ceremonies will be rarely performed.
- 3) The religious education of children and adults will be more formalised and will be of greater importance to the individual.
- 4) The fire temple will be substituted by a simpler replica, though in the distant future an authentic fire temple may appear.
- 5) The priesthood will interact more closely with the lay Zoroastrian and will have to communicate the meaning and substance of the prayers and ceremonies.
- 6) The racial character of Zoroastrians will change slowly but not totally.
- 7) Western customs and attitudes will replace Indian and Iranian customs and attitudes.

3. MR. S. F. DESAI\* presented a Worm's-Eye View since the scope of a paper of the sort in his hand was very vast and could need several hands and years to collect data, and compile, collate, tabulate, analyse and interpret them. Social survey according to Mr. Desai had to do with the population and he pointed out that the Parsi population which was approximately, 90,000 in 1891 had risen to approximately 1,15,000 in 1941 and had dwindled to approximately, 91,000 in 1961. Since the fifties the community had lost at the rate of 10% a decade. The child population 0 to 15 years per hundred of the population had gone down by 10% between 1911 and 1961 and the grand-parent population, that is, the population above the age of 51 had risen by 100% during the same

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#### MR. SAPUR F. DESAI

\* Scholar and authority on matters connected with the Zoroastrian community in India. For many years Secretary of the Parsi Punchayet, Bombay. Also acted as Secretary-General of the 2nd World Zoroastrian Congress. His book "A Community at the Cross-roads", a study in demography, published three decades ago, is a landmark in scholarship pertaining to Zoroastrian community. Currently engaged in writing the History of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet 1860 to 1960.



period. It was the aging population that had brought in many problems which one had to take into account while planning for the future. Gujarat population was also being denuded and a survey made over 10 years ago of rural Parsis had shown a disturbing trend. Mr. Desai suggested several steps to meet some of the urgent problems. They were, maintaining of a Population Register, Marriage Loan Programme, Housing, Marriage Counselling Bureau including Genetics Counselling and considering Children as Community's Wards.

On the cultural side Mr. Desai referred to several problems and suggested certain changes in legal and social spheres, for instance, Marriage and Inheritance, Community Organisation, Resource Utilisation, Politics and Civics, Youth Movement, Art and Architecture, Painting, Music and Dance and Sports.

Mr. Desai also referred to religious beliefs and customs like Muktaḍ, Marriage and Navjote expenses and the fourth estate. Especially how the last mentioned could affect an established order by the use of its pen.

Referring to Social Values and Intergenerational Change Mr. Desai brought out the value of Parsis as Catalytic Agents in the past and advocated that if the Parsis wanted to maintain their position as heretofore their value concept must undergo a healthy change. He wanted the community to take the help of social scientists in this respect.

4. MR. SHIAVAX D. NARGOLWALA\* felt sceptical about generalising social and cultural values as, though the Parsi community was small, the co-existence of orthodoxy and progressive attitude had existed side by side. He, however, took a number of points in the ambit of his paper, such as, demographic and economic trends, ignorance of religion, priestly class and their amelioration, inter-communal marriages, legal reforms, problems relating to the disposal of the dead, leadership of the community and the need for appropriate organisation at national and international levels. He sounded a note of warning about the fall in population and suggested aiming at a modest rate of growth. He suggested early marriages and housing as a panacea.

Referring to economic decline he stated that while the Parsis were still holding their own in professions like law, medicine, accountancy, architecture, etc. their strength in services like I.A.S. and armed forces was falling.

As to inter-communal marriages Mr. Nargolwala stated that the problem was not peculiar to the Parsis alone. But in their case it assumed greater importance since it led to a decline in number. He stated that inter-communal marriages could not be prevented merely by threat and hostile attitude from the orthodox section. But it can be reduced to a certain extent by social and cultural activities which can bring Parsi boys and girls together. He referred to Davar's judgment in the Parsi Punchayet Case of 1906 and stated that according to the scriptural evidence before Davar and Beamen JJ there was no bar against con-

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**MR. SHIAVAX D. NARGOLWALA, I.C.S. (Retd.)**

\* Was for many years a distinguished member of the I.C.S. and retired from this Service as an Additional Secretary, Ministry of Finance, after having held several high positions in the Government of India and also in State Governments. Currently President of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman. He was one of the Founder members of the Federation of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India and is currently its Vice-President.

version. He also referred to the opinions given by three eminent Counsel in 1933, namely Sir Jamshedji Kanga, Mr. F. J. Coltman, and Mr. Bhulabhai Desai who had unanimously opined that the various resolutions passed by the Parsis in Bombay from time to time had no legal and binding force. Only the Courts could decide such matters and not the meetings of the Parsis. He also referred to the Privy Council judgment in the Bella case which laid down a principle that, although Bella was not entitled as of right to use a Parsi temple or to attend or to participate in any of the religious ceremonies performed therein, the Trustees themselves had discretion which, if they exercised, in favour of Bella, who was a child of Parsi mother and a non-Parsi father, they would not be committing a breach of trust. In order to avoid certain predicaments with regard to the cases of non-Parsi spouses Mr. Nargolwala advocated the Iranian Law which meant an affidavit signed by the Non-Zoroastrian spouse stating that he believed in Zoroastrian faith and sincerely wished to be accepted in the Zoroastrian community, a certificate by an authorised Mobed testifying that the person had learnt the basic prayers and the essential principles of Zoroastrian faith and a certificate by seven Zoroastrians that that person was of good character and integrity.

Mr. Nargolwala also advocated reform of Parsi laws. As to the disposal of the dead he believed in Dokhmenashini. But where the Dokhmas cannot be maintained because of scarcity of birds, he saw no objection to the system of burial and where both the system existed in the same place he would leave it to the relatives of the deceased to decide which facility they would like to avail of. As to 'Sezda' he felt that to prevent the non-Parsis from doing the 'Sezda' under the guise of antiquated customs and false religious doctrine would harm the image of the Parsi community amongst sister communities.

On the question of cremation he asked whether a Parsi priest could perform a funeral and other ceremonies in such cases. Some priests are already willing to perform such ceremonies and that is the matter of their belief and conscience and calls for no controversy Mr. Nargolwala averred.

Mr. Nargolwala also referred to lack of leadership in the community and wanted the Punchayet Trustees' election to be on democratic lines.

Mr. Nargolwala finally stated that the Federation of the Anjumans of India had come into existence and he wanted a similar organisation at the national and international levels.

5. MR. MANOUCHER MOBARAKE\* reminded the audience that the mode of living, culture, society and customs had undergone many changes in the past two decades and more changes were expected especially at the turn of the century. He exhorted the audience to make all their actions logically keeping in mind Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

He stated that in the time of the Pahlavi Dynasty the Zoroastrians of Iran were happy and Zoroastrian culture and civilisation were being revived.

#### MR. MANOUCHER MOBARAKI

\* An Iranian Citizen and a prominent businessman. Was educated in India and was one of the founder members of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman of Bombay. He is very active in the affairs of the Zoroastrian community in both Iran and India and actively participated in the 1st and 2nd World Zoroastrian Congresses.



While suggesting that rituals prescribed in religion should be observed implicitly, he wanted a solution for religious observances and true spirit of Zoroastrianism to be evolved.

Referring to the Towers of Silence he stated that on account of aeroplanes and helicopters, extinction of birds of prey and expansion of cities and towns had made it impractical to consign dead bodies to the Towers and they were being buried.

He added that preparations were under way in Iran to cremate dead bodies.

As regards the paucity of Mobeds he suggested that to encourage the younger generations to choose this holy profession steps must be taken to improve condition and status of Mobeds and Dasturs.

He advocated uniformity of calendar.

He also advocated a panel of scholars to eradicate superstitious practices and non-Zoroastrian beliefs from our religion.

Mr. Mobarake wanted that wrong interpretations of the Zoroastrian writers should be corrected by Zoroastrian Scholars.

6. MR. RUSTOM S. GAE\* termed his paper as Reform in Parsi Law. He took in his ambit Parsi Marriage & Divorce Act, Intestate Succession Act and Adoption. Pointing to the anomaly as to the children of non-Zoroastrian father and Parsi mother Mr. Gae wanted that on principles of justice and equity the children of non-Parsi fathers and Parsi mothers should be placed on par with children of Parsi fathers and non-Parsi mothers, otherwise the practice becomes incongruous and paradoxical. He stated that inter-communal marriages among the Parsis are said to be high and as such the community is deprived of legitimate population. He stated that time had come to redefine comprehensively the word 'Parsi' and examine at the same time inclusion therein children of a non-Parsi father and a Parsi mother. This might be done by suitably amending the definition of the 'Parsi' contained in Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act.

As to the controversy of proselytisation Mr. Gae advised avoidance of the same at the present juncture as there are many burning and crucial problems facing the community.

He advocated divorce by mutual consent. Mr. Gae was not in favour of having Parsi delegates for the Matrimonial Courts acting as a jury. During the time of British there were British Judges and the system worked well. But now that Judges were Indians and are supposed to be familiar with the Parsi customs and usages the system of delegates should be dispensed with, more especially when the Constitution contemplates uniformity of personal laws in all community.

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#### MR. RUSTOM S. GAE

\* Was a prominent and senior member of the Government of India Administrative Service. He held for several years the prestigious position of Secretary to the Ministry of Law. On retirement, he took up practice as a Senior Advocate in the Supreme Court. He is the author of many books in different branches of law and has participated in many international conferences, both as a leader and as a delegate. His presentation of several papers has been highly appreciated both in India and abroad.

He wanted the clause in the Parsi Marriage & Divorce Act for granting divorce on the ground of conversion to be deleted. Besides in the context of the changed social status of Parsi women coupled with the avowed declaration of equality with man and woman as envisaged in the Constitution, it is irrational and improper to place the obligation of maintenance after divorce on the husband only.

He also saw the necessity of amendments in the Act regarding Divorce on grounds of cruelty, desertion, leprosy and mental disorder, expeditious disposal of matrimonial cases, holding of proceedings in camera, provisions regarding reconciliation, etc.

With regard to intestate succession he wanted the rights of daughter to be properly safeguarded. According to Mr. Gae the heirs of a Parsi male or a female need not necessarily be Parsis. Mr. Gae expatiated on the adoption of a non-Parsi child by a Parsi. While the former got certain rights as envisaged in the Adoption of Children Bill of 1972 Mr. Gae stated that it did not contain any provision regarding consent to the religion in which the adopted child was to be brought up. He thought the lack of provision was intentional which meant that if a non-Parsi child was adopted by a Parsi under the Bill, when enacted, the child would not automatically become a Parsi Zoroastrian. Even a Behdin child adopted by an Athornan would not automatically become an Athornan. The non-Parsi child according to Mr. Gae when adopted cannot automatically be entitled to claim the benefits of trusts and funds meant for Parsis.

7. MR. BURJOR H. ANTIA\* began his paper with reference to Law of Genetics which he stated was no respecter of personality and the Parsis were not an exception to the rule. The Parsis came to India 1300 years ago to avoid the onslaught of invading Arabs and in order to preserve their religion, race and culture. The early Parsis in India led a simple, honest and hardworking life and took great care for the preservation of religion, culture and hereditary characteristics. It appeared to him that some of the present day Parsis were forgetting the original aim and object of coming to India. According to Mr. Antia the persons who challenged Zoroastrian tenets and attempted to disturb our ethnic and social heritage were the affluent, self-acclaimed scholars and reformists and the self-interested. There was a clamour now of the conversion of persons of other communities, allowing the children of Parsi mothers and alien fathers to be treated as Zoroastrians, ridiculing our religious tenets and ceremonies, allowing the members of other religion to enter Fire Temples and allowing the non-Parsi to see the dead body after 'Sachkar' ceremony.

Mr. Antia thought that no one could have any objection to any person converting himself to Zoroastrian religion. But it should be clearly understood that he would not become a Parsi and he would not be entitled to the benefits of trusts, Fire Temples and Dokhmas as they were specifically meant for Parsi Zoroastrians only. According to the Judgment of the Privy Council in the Case of Saklat vs. Bella children of Parsi women by non-Parsi fathers can never be-

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#### MR. BURJOR H. ANTIA

\* A Solicitor with a distinguished academic background. A fully trained Parsi Priest from the Cama Athornan Institute. Connected with several religious and social organisations. Partner of the firm of M/s Mulla & Mulla & Craigie Blunt & Caroe.



come Parsis. According to him the Parsi population would not be diminished if there were no conversion and he would prefer quality to quantity.

He expressed firm belief that the Dokhmenashini was the best. As to 'Sezda' ceremony there is no bar against showing the dead bodies to the non-Parsis prior to 'Sachkar' ceremony.

Declining the suggestion of throwing open Fire Temples to non-Parsis Mr. Antia asked, when non-Parsis themselves did not want to hurt the feelings of the Parsis by entering the Fire Temples, for whose benefit and for whose sake such controversies were being raked up in the community.

Upto the beginning of this century the Parsi community vibrated with cultural activities such as Avesta, Pehlvi and Persian languages and literature; recitations of Shahnameh, Khayals and Garbas; and Gymnastic activities. But on anglicisation these activities had become neglected day by day. He suggested the following for the future:

- 1) Under no circumstances should we give up Zoroastrian principles and tenets.
- 2) Persuade boys and girls not to marry outside the community.
- 3) Preserve religious institutions for the use of Parsi Zoroastrians only.
- 4) Impart religious knowledge and culture to the young generation.

#### **WORKSHOP: (4.00 to 5.30 P.M.)**

The following points were brought out in the Workshop:

If the community has to change it should be with discretion and caution.

If the Parsis of India are today 90,000, which they were 90 years ago, it is not something to be proud of.

Break down and weakening of culture and interest is due to the breakdown of joint family system.

Marriage should be made compulsory for anybody over 21 years.

If a young man came forward to get married we should subsidise him with housing and loan.

Youth should be encouraged to take part in various seminars.

Youth of today needs motivation to leave cities and to seek better pastures elsewhere.

The first step towards understanding any problem is to collect factual information and data as the Delhi Anjuman is trying to gather.

Summary of discussion as presented at the concluding Session:

1. On the issue of mixed marriages there appeared to be unanimous agreement that these should not be encouraged and that all that was possible should be done to avoid them in the future.
2. On the issue of conversion generally the consensus of opinion was unanimously against any indiscriminate conversion.

3. On the issue of the initiation into the Zarathustrian Faith of the children of non-Parsi fathers and Parsi mothers, the consensus of opinion was against the same.
4. On the issue of rituals and ceremonies the consensus of opinion appeared to be that although rituals and ceremonies should be performed and observed they should not be a substitute for lack of moral or ethical conduct in the individual's life.
5. On the issue of Dokhmenashini the consensus of opinion appeared to be in favour of the continuance of the system wherever it was practicable.
6. A certain amount of dissatisfaction was expressed with the Parsi Panchayet election system.
7. The youth of the community should concern itself with and should be given opportunities to actively associate itself with matters of social and cultural welfare in the community.
8. Mr. Justice J.R. Vimadalal (Retd.) handed over to the Chairman and the Rapporteur for record, a copy of the brief statement which he made at the Workshop in response to certain statements in Mr. Shrivastav D. Nargolwala's paper. A copy of the statement is attached hereto.

Justice J.R. Vimadalal (Retd.)

Workshop re Paper No. V, 6-1-1978.

I want to point out two wrong statements in Mr. Shrivastav D. Nargolwala's Paper, which if allowed to stand unrefuted, are likely to cause misconception in the minds of the Parsee public:

1) He stated that in 1933, Sir Jamshedji Kanga, Mr. F. J. Coltman, and Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, had unanimously opined that resolutions passed at Samast Anjuman Meetings of Parsis in Bombay from time to time, had no legal and binding force. I have a verbatim copy of that opinion with me here, if anybody wishes to see it. They have given no such opinion. What they opined was that the particular resolutions were "not validly passed" at that meeting, because of the Chairman's wrongful refusal to allow certain amendments to be moved, though they were germane to the main resolution. Even as to that opinion, it may be that it was not pointed out to those eminent Counsel in the Case for Opinion submitted to them, that a Samast Anjuman Meeting is in the nature of a Referendum and it is for that reason that amendments are not allowed to be moved at such meetings;

2) Whilst stating that Daver and Beaman JJ in the case of Sir Dinshaw Petit vs. Sir Jamshetjee Jejeebhoy have laid down that the Zoroastrian religion not only permitted, but enjoined conversion, Mr. Nargolwala has conveniently omitted what follows (at page 110 of 11 BLR 85), viz. "But ever since their advent into India, they had never attempted to convert anyone into their religion, and not a single such incident had been proved before the Court." In Saklat vs. Bella, which was a case from Rangoon, the Privy Council was not concerned with the position in India in regard to conversion.

NOTE : To reply to the above Mr. Nargolwala sought the permission of the Chairman of the Session on the 7th afternoon, Mr. J. N. Guzder, and replied as follows :



Mr. Vimadalal had remarked that in his (Mr. Nargolwala's) statement there were factually incorrect statements. First, that the resolutions of a Samast Anjuman Meeting are not binding and have no legal force. Mr. Vimadalal had said that the opinion quoted by him did not suggest this view. Secondly, that Bella v/s Saklat had nothing to do with conversion.

On the first point the Parsi Punchayet had taken opinion of three eminent Counsel, the Advocate General, Mr. Dinshaw Daver and Mr. Inverarity. The Trustees, Mr. Nargolwala said, had asked the following question:

"If the question is, if the significance or true meaning of the words Parsi and Zoroastrian cannot be determined under the present circumstances, how otherwise can they be determined. Can the Parsi community assembled at a public meeting either unanimously or by a large majority give expression to its views and signify the sense in which it wishes to take the words 'Parsi' and 'Zoroastrian' and thereby authoritatively determines the meaning and exact significance of these words so that such meaning or significance shall at all times thereafter be binding upon and unchallengeable by the Parsi community.

Mr. Nargolwala then quoted the replies as follows:

Advocate General : "In my opinion they cannot effectually achieve this result."

Mr. Daver : "To my mind there is no difficulty about the true meaning of the words 'Parsi' and 'Zoroastrian'. I do not see how the majority of the community can enforce their views and wishes on the minority however small that minority may be. If the minority have certain legal rights, they would be entitled to assert them and will successfully assert them inspite of any number of resolutions which the majority may pass. The majority may of course form rules and regulations for the guidance of the community but such rules and regulations must not have the effect of depriving any member of the Parsi community of his legal rights."

The next question asked by the Trustee was:

"If this can be effected by a resolution passed at a public general meeting of the Parsi community, would the Courts recognise the validity of the same and adopt the meanings and the significance so attached to the words 'Parsi' and 'Zoroastrian' or apply such meaning or significance to those terms where they occur in any Act of Legislature."

The replies were:

Advocate General : "I think not."

Mr. Daver : "I think the court will give weight to any resolution which the community may pass but would not be bound to accept them as valid or binding on all members of the community."

Mr. Inverarity : "The community cannot decide the question by a vote. They can resolve on what the true construction is. If they are wrong as to the true construction, their valuation

would go for nothing. I do not think the Court would be influenced by the vote whichever way it was."

As to Bella v/s Saklat Mr. Nargolwala said that it was absurd to say that there was no reference to conversion in the said case. He said "There is a reference and a pointed reference, a whole page is devoted to it."

(With the end of the tape here there is nothing more in the transcript.)



Saturday 7-1-1978 : Morning Session

## TOPIC NO. II

### PAPER : ECONOMIC UPLIFT OF THE ZOROASTRIANS

9.00 to 10.30 A.M.	— Chairman	— Prof. Rusi J. Taraporewalla
	Rapporteur	— Mr. H. D. Mehta
	Paper Readers	— 1. Dr. F. A. Mehta 2. Dr. J. A. Mody 3. Mr. D. B. Irani 4. Mr. H.J.H. Taleyarkhan
10.30 to 11.00 A.M.	— Coffee Break	5. Dr. Farhang Mehr.
11.00 to 12.30 P.M.	— Workshop	

1. DR. FREDDIE A. MEHTA\* speaking on the 'Economic Uplift of Zoroastrians' stated that immediately after the Second World War 'economic growth' became the battle-cry of a number of poor countries with 'planning' as its almost inevitable weapon. He expected that the Parsi community with its role in pioneering industrialisation of India would have braced itself to meet this challenge. Yet among the 148 Large and Larger Industrial Houses and Large Independent Companies there was only one conspicuous new Parsi name in the long list of 'large houses' or 'giant companies', namely, Shapoorji Pallonji, apart from Tatas and Wadias who vaguely enjoyed among the masses the reputation of being 'Parsi Firms'. He bewailed the present trend where a community of capitalists had become a community of clerks. According to him the number of persons seeking charity or doles was demonstrably increasing and this was testified to by the innumerable Parsi trusts. Let alone Bombay the plight of the Parsis in the rural areas was, according to Dr. Mehta, pitiable.

The indices of the economic deterioration of the Parsi community were enumerated by Dr. Mehta as follows:

- 1) Growing sale of buildings and land to non-Parsis.
- 2) Inflation.
- 3) High cost of living.
- 4) Failure of the community to be actively involved in distribution and trading activities.
- 5) Propensity of Parsi investors to cling to shares of price-controlled industries like steel, power, coal, cement, etc.

#### DR. FREDDIE A. MEHTA

\* A graduate of the Bombay University. He later studied at the University of London and the London School of Economics for his doctorate. Director of several large Companies. Senior Director of Tatas, Member of the three export companies of the United Nations. His latest work "India 2000", a very thought provoking contribution to the economics of India.

- 6) Rent Act taking a heavy toll of the real income of urban Parsi landlords.
- 7) Agricultural land reforms depriving Parsi families of their land.

While lamenting the loss on economic side Dr. Mehta referred to massive investment in education of the community. Again if the Parsis were not in the fore front of construction activities in Bombay, there were at least half-a-dozen Parsi promoted firms that were well-known leaders in this field. In the tourist industry with its concomitant hotelling, travelling agencies, the Parsi firms have been conspicuous.

Where husbands and wives both worked, even though their salaries might be low, they were protected by dearness allowance, etc. against the ravages of inflation. By way of example he pointed out that the salaries of even peons in the organised sectors of industry, banking, insurance, transportation, etc. hovered between Rs. 700 and 950 per month on an average.

In the last 30 years foreign private investment in the country had grown from Rs. 256 crores to nearly Rs. 2000 crores and Bombay had been the magnet till very recently for investments by foreign companies. This has created employment opportunities for stenographers, managers, and other professional talents.

Although the Parsis have not as individuals sponsored large enterprises, a number of relatively small, often knowledge-based industries have been brought into existence, more particularly in the field of chemicals, electronics, engineering and mining.

Heavily subsidised housing colonies have played no small a role in sustaining the real standard of living of several Parsi families.

While there has been an outflow of Parsis to foreign countries as pilots, doctors, engineers, businessmen, etc. this so called brain-drain or skill-drain has provided the community with some sort of an international base, albeit it might have serious impact on the future solidarity of the community.

Dr Mehta felt that circumstantial evidence did not all too easily support the thesis of an overall deterioration of the economic conditions of the Parsi community during the last 30 years.

Discussing the future of the community he referred to the present trend of government preferring priorities of planning in favour of agriculture and felt that it must create problems at least for the next five to eight years for urban centres. For a highly urbanised community like the Parsis this must pose a great challenge.

Lamenting the fall in number of community he pointed out that the Parsi talent had to compete with 10 million other Indians in 1951 but by 1981 it would have to compete with 50 millions. In 1951 a Parsi appearing for the I.A.S. examination competed with probably 2500 initial applicants. But now he had to compete with over 8000. While opportunities grew in an arithmetic ratio, competition grew in a geometric ratio. The reservation of seats and jobs for scheduled tribes and scheduled castes would further militate against the Parsis competing for jobs.



He referred to the perennial charge of inbreeding made against the Parsis. But this simply ignores the fact, according to Dr. Mehta, that today the Parsi community is the most out-side-married community in the whole of India and that at the rate intermarriages are continuing the Parsis would soon be integrated out of existence.

Besides the image of the Parsi community as an 'excessively affluent' section of the Indian Society would positively affect its prospects in a country dedicated to help the 'vulnerable sections of society'.

The increased longevity of the Parsi community means in most cases that the young would have to look after the old and where they are not prepared to do so the responsibilities have to be shouldered by charitable trusts.

Dr. Mehta asked if there were any answers. 30 years ago the economic extinction of the Parsi community was predicted. But today the extinction is far more deadly in the sphere of population growth. Economically, however, the community has showed its resilience and vitality. He named the Parsi-promoted firms like M. N. Dastur & Co., Shapoorji Pallonji, Godrej, etc. He advocated 'an investment in excellence'. The Parsi community with its massive investment in knowledge must keep up this area of specialisation producing an endless array of scientists, technologists, doctors, engineers, accountants, etc. He pointed out that a brilliant young technologist has been able to build up reserves of nearly Rs. 80 lacs against his original investment of Rs. 2.5 lacs. He wanted the Parsis to utilise such institutions as are currently in existence for the development of what may be called 'the agro-economic field'. Given the restoration of spirit of both solidarity and charity, given the galvanising impact of that entrepreneurship that was once the hall-mark of the community, and given some sense of direction by its policy-framers, the Parsi community with its substantial investments in knowledge-based professions, knowledge utilising industries and knowledge diffusing institutions can still beat the tyranny of statistics that threatens to swamp them. He exhorted the community to keep up faith and vision without which the people must perish. Let us expect no economic miracles without the restoration of faith.

2. DR. JAMSHED ARDESHIR MODY\* started with the assumption that the economic health of the Parsi community in India had been declining over the last several years and what was once a community of adventurous businessmen is now largely a community of job holders at lower and middle managerial levels. He advocated Zoroastrian Community Development Institute to undertake economic development of the community, the scope of the Institute to include religious education, family life, Zoroastrian religious affairs and problems of Zoroastrian communities abroad. He laid down the following objectives:

- 1) To increase the earning power of individuals including women and retired persons,

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#### DR. JAMSHED A. MODY

\* A scientist and an engineer. Also a specialist in Management, trained in India and the U.S.A. Worked in the Tata Consultancy Services and has established own engineering and electronic companies. A grand son of the renowned Parsi scholar the late Dr. Jivanji Jamshedji Mody.

- 2) to foster the growth of Zoroastrian owned business particularly the small ones, and
- 3) to sustain the economic viability of communal institute.

In terms of atomic science Dr. Mody talked of a practical imperative to generate a certain 'critical mass' below which 'the reaction' will not take place. He, therefore, suggested target of Rs. 20 lacs to begin with so that it could earn an annual income of Rs. 2 lacs to pay for whole time staff.

One of the prerequisites Dr. Mody laid down was the necessity of community's economic census to include (a) the number of Zoroastrians in the working age-group, (b) the number of unemployed, employed and employable among the underemployed, (c) the number of self-employed, (d) family income and per capita income, (e) distribution of assets and rate of savings, and (f) demographic information such as age distribution, size of household, earners per household, etc.

To increase the earning power of individuals he suggested setting up large and effective vocational guidance programmes. To foster the growth of Zoroastrian owned business he suggested development of special programmes in entrepreneurial development. He stated that there was enough enthusiasm in the community but what was missing was a well-planned, well-set up institution to channel the resources and enthusiasm into modern, constructive, community development programmes.

3. MR. DINSHAH BEHRAM IRANI\* stated that at the beginning of the century the Parsis were at the fore front in all walks of life. But today and more specially in the last 25 years they were losing ground in the economic front. He thought that the cause lay within the community and the success would also come from the community. He analysed the causes of the present day plight and attributed them to (a) prosperity of bye-gone days, rendering Parsis soft and lacking in initiative, enterprise and hardwork, (b) sophisticated Parsi home life, (c) lack of example by parents to set a good example for living simple, religious and moral life.

He deprecated the doles system. According to him Parsi homes needed a thorough overhauling. The Trustees of various charity trusts must cooperate with one another and pool their resources to their fullest extent possible. Parsis expect their Punchayets and Anjumans to spoon-feed them. He advocated self-help.

4. MR. HOMI J. H. TALEYARKHAN\* started his paper with the head-

#### MR. DINSHAH B. IRANI

\* Vice President and Trustee of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman and the Iran League, Bombay, Managing Trustee of various other Zoroastrian Organisations. A very keen social worker for the Parsis and the Iranian Zoroastrians of India in the field of employment and education.

#### MR. HOMI J. H. TALEYARKHAN

\* An eminent Parsi in the political field. Had made contribution in the economic and the social fields of the country. One time Cabinet Minister, Government of Maharashtra and the Member of the Legislature for a long period. An ambassador to Libya and the Chairman of the Maharashtra State Finance Corporation of India. Keen on solving economic problems of the Zoroastrians.



ing 'Parsis Are Hovering Between The Bright And the Bleak: We Need To Wage A War Against Want'. He berated the idea that the Parsi community being numerically small was hampered and handicapped. He cited the instances of big and small countries that were doing well including some 38 countries having less population than one hundred thousand, which is even less than the Parsi population of 1,25,000. We might have been pioneers of industrial, educational and economic enterprises, but we no longer hold that position because of the growth of our sister communities. Looking to the posh colony Cusrow Baug one would get the impression that it is a luxury colony, full of Mercedes and other cars, full of people earning in four figures and more and many living in rentals of two figures a month. That, Mr. Taleyarkhan stated, was an abuse. He suggested that the economically weaker sections of the community could take assistance of many State and Central Government Schemes for self-employment. We should not create an impression as though we do not need any outside assistance and we can depend solely on our sources from our charitable trusts. He, however, deprecated the idea of making people depend on charities and doles as that tended to destroy the very fabric of one's character to be self-reliant. He suggested improving of housing conditions. He pointed out misconception amongst the community that the Parsi Punchayets and Anjumans are flooded with funds from various trusts and crores of rupees are locked up without being utilised. He also pointed out that the funds were all earmarked mostly for ungainful or unutilisable purposes. But the Trustees are legally bound to carry out the terms and conditions of the trust.

He stated that it was a moot point as to what percentage of the community actually participated in the struggle for freedom, bar notable examples like Madame Cama, Dadabhoi Nowrojee, Dinsha Wacha, Pheroze Shah Mehta, Khurshed F. Nariman and some others.

He thought the idea of increasing the number of community was highly hazardous because shortage of housing and growth of families do not go hand-in-hand to make for family happiness. He referred to the long-betrothed families and while he saw the necessity of providing housing to such couples he still felt that in course of time to encourage the growth of too large families would be hazardous step.

Referring to taxation as it stands today it cuts into the earnings of even four-figure earners and so we should advise the community not to aspire to a population which would be a leap forward into the dark.

He deplored the number of beggars found near Fire Temples, Dokhmas, Well, Albless Baug, etc.

As to denudation of Parsi population in rural areas Mr. Taleyarkhan suggested that the younger generation born and bred in rural areas should take advantage of new openings and incentives that have been created for their development in their locale. With this aim in view, ways and means will have to be found he said, how to coordinate the activities of Parsi institutions all over India.

5. DR. FARHANG MEHR was specially requested by the Chairman Prof. R. J. Taraporewalla to speak on Iranian Zoroastrians and he gave a brief account of the economic condition of the Zoroastrians in Iran. 90 years ago the situation in Iran was bad. But in the last 70 or 80 years the Parsis of India especially the

Petits rendered great assistance by setting up amelioration fund for Zoroastrians of Iran sent Manekji Hataria to look after the interest of the Zoroastrians. There are about 28,000 Zoroastrians in Iran. About 14 years ago when a team of people came from the World Bank to study the situation for grant of a loan it was a credit to the Zoroastrian community that wherever they went they found a Zoroastrian at the top. When they went to the Central Bank, the Deputy Governor was a Zoroastrian. When they went to the Planning Organisation the Deputy Chairman was a Zoroastrian. When they went to the Ministry of Finance the Deputy Minister of Finance was a Zoroastrian, the speaker himself. They wondered how many Zoroastrians there were and when told that they were about 28,000 they were surprised because whosoever they met happened to be a Zoroastrian and Dr. Mehr explained that that was 'excellence' of the community.

There is no illiteracy among the Zoroastrians of Iran and no beggars. There are very few who live on charity. Average Zoroastrian is well off and he sends his children out of the country for education. This kind of situation is the result of the petro-dollar. Dr. Mehr asserted and concluded that the condition of Zoroastrian in Iran was much better now than before.

#### **WORKSHOP : (11.00 to 12.30 P.M.)**

A delegate from Pakistan stated that he was proud of his country and of his community that had played an important role in the progress and prosperity of the country. Even in education the top positions were achieved by the Parsis.

Someone suggested that the Parsis of Iran and India combine to strengthen the economic ties.

Dr. Freddie Mehta one of the speakers was asked the approximate value of the total industrial production of the Parsi firms and its relation to the total industrial production in the private sector. Dr. Freddie Mehta in his reply wanted to know what constituted a Parsi firm and stated he would define a Parsi firm as meaning a Parsi-promoted firm. This may give a faulty conception as in a number of Parsi firms the Parsis would comprise hardly 2%. He pointed out that the total value of the industrial output in India in the private sector was likely to be about 13,000 crores and the value of the contribution of the House of Tatas, Bombay Dyeing, and some 52 companies studied would be a little less than 2,000 crores, to which the Tatas, contribution would alone be 1,100 crores.

A successful industrialist referred to two innate qualities of the Parsis, namely, integrity and organisational and entrepreneurial skill. He advocated Dr. J. Mody's suggestion for organising a community development centre.

To minimise on cost and time of construction of houses a suggestion was made to go in for pre-fabrication as was being done by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet.

Someone suggested erection of stalls for giving employment to Parsis on cooperative consumer basis and he wanted to break up walls of Parsi colonies, compounds of Atash Behrams and Agiaries and make room for such stalls.

A suggestion was made to have a working group consisting of economists, industrialists and professionals to work out some kind of a scheme for planning. The prior condition would be collection of data for which he suggested a data



bank. A doubt was expressed whether people would give the information about their correct income.

Summary as presented at the concluding Session :

Dr. Freddie A. Mehta in his paper highlighted the pioneering role which the Parsi community played in the industrialisation of India. This role, however, had a sharp erosion in the post independence period when the one time Parsi community of capitalists turned into a community of clerks. He analysed some of the prime causes for the economic deterioration of the Parsis.

On an optimistic front, Dr. Mehta equally highlighted some of the positive signs and features on the economic sustenance of the community. He pointed out that the community's investment in education had paid a very rich dividend in producing a large contingent of doctors, lawyers, engineers and accountants. The community also had its share in the construction boom as also in the tourist industry.

The shift to white-collared jobs also lead to economic rejuvenation, specially of the middle class Parsis where the husband and wife both earning has resulted in a fairly good economic affluence.

Parsi entrepreneurship is also evident in some of the relatively small knowledge-based industries, specially in the field of chemicals, electronics and to some extent engineering and mining.

For a future perspective, Dr. Mehta suggested that the Community will have to seriously think of falling in line with national plans and priorities for strengthening of the rural sector. The Community will have to shed its highly urbanised outlook and plan for a conscious shift to share the prosperity of rural development. He urged the Community to follow the example of the Swiss and the Jews who believe in 'an investment in excellence'. To this effect, Dr. Mehta suggested that every Parsi child must be indoctrinated with the example of immense hard work, thrift and innovativeness. He further urged that the Community should continue to provide its stream of doctors, lawyers, engineers and scientists, but for the middle class Parsis he emphasised the adoption of vocational skills which holds out a future promise not only in the urban but also in the rural sector. The establishment of vocational institutes is a sine qua non to this effect.

Mr. Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan in his paper highlighted the need to wage war against want on a national scale and he felt that the Parsi Community must make its own contribution. He said that although the Community is a microscopic minority, it is not innocuous and the contribution of Zoroastrians is not only in India but also abroad. He further exhorted that Parsis must take the opportunities of the prospects offered by the development boom in the West and Parsi firms must venture out into foreign collaboration, thus widening employment opportunities to the Community. According to him, inborn spiritualism helped to improve the economic growth of the country.

Mr. Taleyarkhan also felt that the Community is not taking full advantage of the various schemes offered by the Central and State Governments for self-employment in starting of new businesses. He felt that one of the causes for this lacuna related to inadequate information system and guidance bureau.

Mr. Taleyarkhan further laid heavy emphasis on the housing problem because in his opinion a lot of the economic ills of the Community could be mitigated if the Community embarked upon a massive housing programme. Here he made a specific mention that various trust Funds have a limited purpose and are not free for use as one expects them to be. The communication gap needs to be bridged so as to create a better understanding of the problem.

Dr. J. N. Mody in his paper outlined a proposal for setting up of a Zoroastrian Community Development Institute which would, inter alia, undertake economic development of the Community. He felt that such an Institute should be run on a full time basis with a completely professional outlook, manned by an exceptionally competent faculty. The Institute must first take up an economic survey of the Community and based on this survey draw up future action-oriented programmes. He also gave a broad idea of the financial structure of the Institute and made an appeal to Zoroastrians all over the world that this Institution must be set up with all the speed at one's command, so that there can be a quick transformation within the Community from the present somewhat stagnating level to a rapid growth.

Mr. D. B. Irani in his paper categorised the economic strata of the society and also pointed out the various economic ills which plagued the Community. He felt that the Community should produce more technocrats and there should be a central agency to help the youth for vocational guidance and career planning.

Dr. Farhang Mehr gave a succinct report of the economic status of the Zoroastrians in Iran and very proudly proclaimed that there has been a total economic revolution of the Zoroastrian community in Iran in the last seven decades. He eulogised the hard work of the Zoroastrian entrepreneurs in Iran most of whom were self-made.

Dr. Farhang Mehr welcomed the idea of Zoroastrians from India bringing their professional experience and expertise to Iran and collaborating in various ways for the betterment of Zoroastrians in both these countries.

In the discussion that followed the following additional view-points emerged:

- 1) the community should live up to ideals of integrity, self-sufficiency and hard work;
- 2) they should give serious consideration for a shift towards rural settlement;
- 3) Zoroastrians in India and Iran must make collaborative efforts for the economic uplift of Zoroastrians in India;
- 4) there should be a directory of funds which would give detailed information for guidance of youth;
- 5) the Punchayets in collaboration with various Parsi entrepreneurs should consider setting up of agro-industries in the vast lands under the control of the Punchayets;
- 6) full use should be made of Punchayet properties to encourage Parsis to open stalls for business;



- 7) the Vocational Guidance Bureau must be thoroughly activated and a central data bank should be established which maintain all possible information regarding job opportunities;
- 8) some approved institutes should conduct courses in entrepreneurship, which would encourage youth to take up opportunities of self-employment;
- 9) some institutes should conduct training for competitive examination (Army) so that our youth could fare better;
- 10) serious consideration should be given for the economic uplift of the Mobeds;
- 11) the saving ratio in every family should be raised;
- 12) Finally, it was the feeling of the House that resilience, adaptability and devoted religious faith should spur the Parsi Community to reactivate its entrepreneurial spirit and cross wider and distant frontiers on a progressive economic horizon.

**Saturday 7.1.1978 : Afternoon Session**

2.00 to 3.00 P.M. — Chairman

— Dr. S. B. Anklesaria

Speakers

- 1. Mr. Ali Akbar Jaffery  
2. Mr. Ardeshir Jehanian  
3. Dr. B. Farahdieh  
4. Mr. Jamshed Mavalwalla  
(In absentia)

3.30 to 4.00 P.M. — Coffee Break

4.00 to 5.30 P.M. — Speakers

5. Mrs. Dolly Dastur  
6. Mr. Khojaste Mistree  
7. Prof. Willard B. Oxtoby  
8. Mr. Meherban Khushravi.

7.00 P.M.

— Entertainment:  
Gujarati Play

— Birla Matushri Sabhaghar.

1. MR. ALI AKBAR JEFFERY described how he learnt Avesta and Pahlavi under Dr. Manek B. Pithawala of Karachi and Dastur M. N. Dhalla. Under the advice of the former he taught Avesta-Pahlavi for sometime in a school in Karachi. Dastur M. N. Dhalla's advice to Mr. Jaffery was not to rush to translate the Gathas since Mr. Jaffery had a penchant for the Gathas. It is not the work of one man but of a team of scholars, Mr. Jaffery feels. He had read many translations and he recommended those of Dr. Taraporewalla and Dastur Bode and Miss Piloo Nanavati. He pointedly referred to different renderings of one little prayer 'Ahunaver' and asked why so many differences of opinion which become wider in interpretations, explanations and commentaries. Mr. Jaffery wanted an official version of the Avesta so that all the interpretations are done in such a way as not to leave any difference in the opinion.

2. MR. ARDESHIR JEHANIAN drew the attention to some fundamental points and stated the importance of the study of the survey of the past, exami-

nation of the present and thought of the future. This should be on scientific and logical lines. He wanted scholars of the community with their vast knowledge and experience to try to show to the world the excellence and noble thoughts of Zoroastrian religion.

3. DR. B. FARAH DIEH of Chicago stated that the Chicago Zoroastrians fully recognise the importance of this Congress and its impact on the world body for years to come. If we fail today the battle would be lost. But with our determination we shall overcome. He drew a dismal picture of a life in the United States, "a melting pot of cultures", where there was complete absorption into the millions with total anonymity. The community needed help and guidance and was hoping for answers and if we failed our first generation Americans, we would have failed completely. He then pointed out how a determined group of Zoroastrians of Chicago got together and created facilities for awakening with religious study meetings, bi-weekly religious instruction programmes for children, and frequent performances of ceremonies and social functions. He wanted the priests to be put at the helm. In 1977 the Chicago Association held the 2nd North American Symposium. He stated that we stood on the threshold of an era in which moral and religious values were rapidly changing and women were demanding entry into the priesthood.

4. MR. JAMSHED MAVALWALLA (in absentia) in his paper had stated that there were 800 to 1000 Parsis in Toronto. But he felt as an anthropologist that if we were to follow strict demographic rules the community stood small change of biological success on its own. Mr. Mavalwalla drew attention of the community to the following aspects keeping the point of survival in mind:

- 1) Tiny population size,
- 2) Small family size,
- 3) The identity of the children,
- 4) The identity of the community and
- 5) Its relation to the larger host population.

Mr. Mavalwalla concluded that in a sea of humanity of 23 million Canadians a few thousand Parsis had much lesser chances of success, more fewer persons in the reproductive age and the trend was to have small-sized families, namely, two children.

As to the identity of children Mr. Mavalwalla stated that in the home environment they endeavour to emulate North American ways and still try to retain a Zoroastrian identity. In the school the child is exposed to an environment where no one has heard of a Zoroastrian.

As to the identity of the community, grown-up persons are lost for want of benefit from being identified with the community, that has a positive image, with other economic gains. In North America the community is faced with an immediate task of projecting itself as the members of an ancient faith. Mr. Mavalwalla thought that the community identity led them to face up to avenues of solution—conversion and cohesion. As to conversion, except in Iran, Zoroastrians are against it. But he stated that the community in North America must seriously begin to consider this mode. In North America there is no question of people rushing to become Zoroastrians in order to be eligible for subsidised



housing and charity relief. Children of Zoroastrian mothers and non-Zoroastrian fathers are being initiated into the fold without any negative comment. As to cohesion he felt the recent symposia held in Toronto and Chicago are one way of coming together. Mr. Mavalwalla made bold to say that while Zoroastrian communities of North America might be tiny in number their influence on a global scale should not be under-estimated and they were likely to set standards which the older and larger Zoroastrian communities would be wise to watch carefully.

5. MRS. DOLLY DASTUR, a delegate from Quebec, Canada, gave a resumé of the Zoroastrian community in the changing North American world. She stated that the Parsis in Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia, approximated to less than 2000 persons. All these three provinces have Zoroastrian Associations or Societies. Her theme was "Historical Review of Religion with Its Vicissitudes." The three provincial associations have for their aim perpetuation of the Zoroastrian faith and inculcation thereof in the younger generation. Along with the Associations of the U.S.A. they got together to exchange views on topics of concern. She emphasised 'adaptability' as the 'keystone of survival'. Dynamism rather than stagnation, flexibility rather than rigidity and moderation and compromise against extremism were suggested for self-evolution. There is a growing interest in the Zoroastrian religion and many are offering to marry Parsis according to their rights raising their children as Zoroastrian. They have made a tape of the Naviote prayers with English translation. In conclusion she said she felt that the Zoroastrians of Canada have rediscovered their pride in their illustrious religion and are rediscovering the theology and liturgy of our scriptures.

6. MR. KHOJASTE MISTREE said that he had not submitted the topic of his paper but he had heard other speakers there for three days and he would speak on "Zoroastrian point of view". He had heard several speakers on conversion, for and against. Before venturing to give his opinion he said he was not a sociologist but a student of religion. He tried to show that there was a racial difference between the Iranis and the Parsis, as the Parsis came from Parthia, Khorasemia, Northern Khorasan, Uzbekistan, etc. and because of the racial differences the customs have been different obviously with regard to conversion. He said he was not "for a moment suggesting the case for racial purity, but all I would like the audience here to know is that the Iranis have always been more liberal in their way of thinking". [This statement created a little furore amongst the Iranian delegates as some of them privately raised objections to this innuendo. Mr. Mistree took time off in the afternoon of Sunday 8th and said "he would apologise straightaway" if he had offended anybody. He tried to explain away that all Zoroastrians came from 'ancient Iran' and the "Parsis and Iranis as well as others make up or form the different ancient Iranian tribes". (Dr. Farhang Mehr, who was presiding and at whose instance Mr. Mistree offered his second statement, told the audience that he hoped the matter was explained to the satisfaction of all and the matter was dropped.)]

Mr. Mistree in his earlier talk showed that Zoroastrian religion had influenced other great oriental religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam — in their traditions, i.e. custom, belief, and opinion, oral or written. He regretted that the community had scholars in all spheres of knowledge except religion: "in all other sciences, yes, we have outstanding people but religion, no". He also said "the best scholars, ladies and gentlemen, are not in India, they are abroad".

He then referred to the priests and their plight. He asked the audience to name an amount for their uplift, and exhorted them to respect their priests. The priests should get together, and elect a head priest like a Pope. Mr. Mistree spoke on many points off-hand, ritual, the work of western savants, etc. He asked the audience not to consider "rituals dead". They had an emotional aspect. Later he said the western scholars had done great disservice. He realised he was contradicting himself and added "forgive me for being scatter-brained but that is how I operate".

Expatiating on the Gathas Mr. Mistree did not see the necessity of going back to them. Islam had Quran and the Hadit and Judaism had Old Testament and the Torah. But by going back to the Gathas we cannot understand religion, we cannot ignore tradition.

Mr. Mistree on several other problems in stages in between including re-incarnation to which he had failed to find any direct evidence from the scriptures.

7. PROFESSOR WILLARD B. OXTOPY had specially come from Canada and thanked the organisers for allowing him to speak. Mr. Oxtoby is a Professor of comparative and historical study of religions, and is currently Director, Centre for Religions Studies, University of Toronto. He regarded the Zoroastrian religion as a living religion. He had studied middle-east religions and as to the influence of Zoroastrianism on other religions he said "the historical interaction to which Mr. Mistree referred at some length that there is an intuitively plausible but historically elusive contribution of Zoroastrianism to the thought of Judaism and Christianity and subsequently Islam".

Prof. Oxtoby was not quite felicitous about Western scholarship. He tried to show how some of the factors 'may make Zoroastrian experience and existence by the year 2000 perceptibly different from the state of affairs today'. He referred in this respect to the following:

1. Resurgence of Zoroastrianism in Iran. There is pride in ancient Iranian heritage and there is a lot of 'linguistic and literary rather than religious, but pride in and sympathy for the ancient religion', which is bound to benefit.

2. The rise in the relative importance of the overseas communities. Formerly the migratory Parsi used to return to his former habitat but now it is different. Parsis are settling down permanently in countries abroad and 'their children are being raised as Australians or Canadians or whatever'.

3. An increasing dependence on the priesthood. There is a paucity of mobeds but in India in the next 25 years there will be some mobeds but in distant lands the Zoroastrians will have to depend on the printed word for their prayers, etc. This will necessitate printing of several books.

In this respect he referred to his visits to some libraries in India and deplored their state of affairs except the K. R. Cama Oriental and Tehran Anjuman Libraries. The Western Zoroastrian settlements have books in English but fewer in Gujarati. There is talk of "No Mobed, no Zoroastrian", but said Oxtoby "No book, no Zoroastrian".

4. Development of adult intellectual leadership. Prof. Oxtoby referred to Sir Rustom Masani's 'The Religion of Good Life' as the most 'felicitous' statement to date of the meaning of the (Zoroastrian) tradition. The religion will



prosper but only as it is taught to a child 'but if it goes on to be something that offers questions and answers to adult minds'.

8. MR. MEHERBAN KHUSHRAVI told the audience that there were two tombs of Zoroaster in Afghanistan, one in Balkh and another in Kaishmark. Around these tombs lived some Zoroastrians but they would tell you they are Zoroastrian only if they know you were a Zoroastrian and if you kept their secret that they lived as Zoroastrians. He exhorted the young people to go there and do some research.

Sunday 8.1.1978: Morning Session

# TOPIC NO. VI

PAPER: THE SETTING UP OF AN ORGANISATION TO PROVIDE A LINK BETWEEN WORLD ZOROASTRIANS AND COMMUNITY OF ACTION AFTER EACH WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS.

9.00 to 10.30 — Chairman	— Dr. Farhang Mehr
Rapporteur	— Mrs. Rhoda Mistry
Paper Readers	— 1. Madame Farangis Shahrokh Engineer
	2. Mr. K. Bhote
	3. Prof. E. Munshi
	4. Mr. R. C. Suntook

1. MRS. FARANGIS K. SHAHROKH ENGINEER\* increasingly felt the need for the establishment of an organisation to serve as a link between Zoroastrians all over the world, to advise and guide small scattered groups and to present to themselves and the rest of the people of the world the correct precepts of their ancient religion and the noble philosophy and teachings of their great Prophet Zoroaster. After the fall of Iran, Zoroastrianism declined in the land of its birth and for centuries the followers of the religion suffered until their deliverance with the rise of the Pahlavi Dynasty, more so during the reign of His Imperial Majesty the Shahanshah Aryameher Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Those who migrated to India 1300 years ago lived peacefully but they are a microscopic community in the sub-continent. Recently a number of Zoroastrians have migrated to the other parts of the world.

Mrs. Engineer defined aim as being promotion of the status of the Zoroastrian religion and the well-being of the Zoroastrians. She felt it was necessary and a crying need that the precepts of the great and noble religion that Zoroaster gave to the world as enunciated in the Gathas and Holy Avesta should once and for all be clearly laid down and published in English, Parsi, Gujarati, French, German, etc. She suggested a team of Avestan scholars for such work. The responsibility of implementing the work should rest on the proposed World Zoroastrian Association. She gave some 21 functions of such an Association, principle of which were :

- 1) To keep contacts with various pockets of Zoroastrian settlement; and to collect, maintain and disseminate statistics of world Zoroastrians.
- 2) To establish centres of research in Zoroastrian religion.
- 3) To establish a central library of books on Zoroastrianism.
- 4) To initiate students and other exchange programmes.

## MADAME FARANGIS SHAHROUKH ENGINEER

\* A graduate from the Tehran University in literature, a Master's Degree of University of Southern California. Deputy to the State Minister for Women's Affair in Vocational Training and Employment of women. Trustee and Honorary Secretary of Ancient Culture and Society, life member of World's Craft Council and International Council of Women, Honorary President of the Zoroastrian Women's Organisation.



- 5) To bring harmony amongst the World Zoroastrians by standardising various differing rituals.
- 6) To prepare films regarding Zoroastrian religion and distribute the same.
- 7) To arrange for priests to visit far-flung Zoroastrians from time to time.
- 8) To carry out or initiate a social and cultural survey of world Zoroastrians.
- 9) To organise regional seminars on human rights, literacy, education, advancement of Zoroastrians and their participation in economic and social development at National and International levels.
- 10) To raise funds for carrying out the above objectives.
- 11) To take action in due course to affiliate the World Zoroastrian Association as a non-governmental organisation to the third Committee of the United Nations ECOSOC.

According to her the World Zoroastrian Association should have eight or more locations in the whole world and the Secretariat should be in Bombay.

The Association should meet for a few days at intervals of 2½ or 3 years.

The Association would perform the following three functions :

- a) Confirm by mid-1979 that the organisers at the venue selected for the IV Congress are well established to conduct the proceedings of the Congress. If not an alternative venue should be selected.
- b) Through the Bombay Secretariat reports from other centres should be obtained and compiled.
- c) The Associations at all centres should be registered. Many International Organisations are registered in Geneva although based elsewhere.

In conclusion Mrs. Engineer prayed that the great and noble religion of Zoroaster would rise once again and become an inspiration and a heavenly beacon to the world of today and tomorrow.

2. MR. KEKI RUTTONSHAW BHOTE\* from Chicago, in a humorous vein, compared the survival of a small community to the community of cockroaches. In a convention the cockroaches resolved to transform themselves into grasshoppers. One weak voice asked as to how the convention proposed to transform themselves into grasshoppers, and pat came the Chairman's reply, "Our executive Committee is the policy making body. We will leave implementation to lower levels".

With this cryptic parable Mr. Bhote switched over and referred to the

#### MR. KEKI R. BHOTE

\* Director of Quality & Value Assurance Motor Rollers Incorporated; Author of text books and many papers. Keen in the service of the Parsi community. President of the Glencoe Board of Education; President of the United Nations Association of Illinois. Founder and President of the Zoroastrian Association of America established in 1965; Trustee of the Zoroastrian Organisation of Chicago. In 1959 selected as one of Chicago's Young Man; in 1975 awarded the United Nations Association's Merit Honour for his services to United Nations.

dwindling number of community and stated that the Jewish community in the United States was itself worried about its survival as their number had fallen from six million to 5.5 million! If the Jews with all their financial strength and solidarity were fearful of their future what hope he asked the 120,000 Zoroastrians had. He saw the need of an organisation to overcome the weakness of our tiny population, so that the many talents of this gifted community could be channeled into productive effort which should be to perpetuate our heritage from one generation to the next. He referred to two models of organisations, namely, of Judaism and the United Nations Association. While the Jewish model had many interesting facets Mr. Bhote preferred the U.N.A. Model for world Zoroastrianism.

As to the prerequisites for a world Zoroastrianism he gave the following :

- 1) The supra-national organisation must not exercise authoritarian power over-riding regional organisations.
- 2) There should be multiple pyramid structures.
- 3) The main purpose of a worldwide organisation should be to secure maximum participation from as many interested and dedicated people as possible.
- 4) There should be gradual evolution of world organisation, rather than a superimposed revolution.
- 5) Every attempt should be made to strengthen the basic building blocs of both local associations and regional groupings.
- 6) A worldwide organisation cannot be left entirely to the vagaries of volunteer inputs. A small but highly competent staff could be most desirable to provide a focus and a momentum.
- 7) There should be constant communication between all Associations or bodies through a newsletter or publication of the world body.

Since a single umbrella organisation cannot adequately cover the many and varied interests of its worldwide constituents Mr. Bhote thought it important that there should be parallel organisations around topics of importance like priesthood, theological studies, education, public relations, finances and world federation.

Since an organisation of this sort cannot be constructed overnight there might be a gestation period but we should start now and today. Once we take the all-important first step, we shall be half way on our journey of perpetuating the glory of our religion and the heritage of our forefathers.

3. PROF. ERACH DINSHAH MUNSHI\* of New York delineated four major objectives which the World Zoroastrian Community must try to achieve,

#### PROF. ERUCH D. MUNSHI

\* Professor of Management in St. John's University, New York; specialised in corporate planning, corporate administrative control, international management and marketing and organisation, Consultant to the American brands of Multi Chem Pvt. Ltd., Consultant to the Industrial Allied Chemicals and Franco of India, Director of Multi Chem Pvt. Ltd., New York; Founder and President of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York.



namely, (1) to widen the scope of inquiry on major issues and interaction between the members of the community the world over, (2) to set-up communication centres in major countries, (3) to advance the goal of development of religious life and (4) to secure a larger identity of our religion to widen spiritual horizons and to reaffirm spiritual roots and values in the face of religious disbeliefs and indifferences.

According to Prof. Munshi the following factors affected the survival and growth of all major religions :

- 1) Urbanisation and industrialisation.
- 2) Intellectual questioning of central authority on secular matters.
- 3) A fashion to be indifferent and unnecessarily critical.
- 4) Backward-class demand for equal opportunity, status, and integration.
- 5) More and more open societies in democratic countries.
- 6) Increased mobility and an extensive interaction due to advanced education.

Referring to the need of an International Zoroastrian Organisation Prof. Munshi suggested the venue of the headquarters to be in Bombay with the Trustees of the Parsi Punchayet taking leadership. He gave the following suggestions and recommendations to strengthen the viability of the International Zoroastrian Organisation :

- a) Formulation of Central Policies on major religious issues and communal problems.
- b) Emphasis on a study of comparative religions.
- c) Due to dispersal of the community in various parts of the world they will need religious centres for worship and cultural activities. The Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York is lucky to have the first Zoroastrian Temple in North America through the generosity of Arbab Rustom Guiv of Iran.
- d) Free and constant exchange of information on important religious matters.
- e) Establishment of research foundations.
- f) Home study course in Avesta to be made available to those who are interested.
- g) In order to increase greater participation the Headquarters should form ad hoc committees which will submit reports on the findings of some specific religious issues and intricate community problems.
- h) Establishment of a world library.

4. MR. RUSTOM C. SUNTOOK\* likened the present position of the community through emergencies and he deliberated the following threatening causes:

- 1) Late marriages.
- 2) Absence of a World Body to mobilise and co-ordinate all resources.
- 3) Restriction of family content.
- 4) Lack of purposeful intent to illuminate community's children with our supreme faith.
- 5) Present day parents not contributing any light.

Mr. Suntook saw the necessity of uplifting the youth of the community particularly the boys, so that our girls may find their match and solve the problem of number.

Mr. Suntook felt an urgency for greater cohesion between different organisations and associations all over the world. He also saw the necessity of a World Organisation of Young Zoroastrians. Referring to the setting up of a World Organisation Mr. Suntook defined the sphere of its functions as economic, social and spiritual. Returning to his anxiety about numbers he saw encouragement in non-Zoroastrian parents and their children being initiated into a Zoroastrian cultural milieu.

Mr. Suntook also gave suggestions for raising finances, the structure of the Organisation, its constitution, its daily work and its spiritual function. He also suggested to negotiate and secure our recognition as an eminent religious body with U.N.O. To that purpose he saw the necessity of a world body.

DR. FARHANG MEHR in his remarks stated that the case had been made now for a necessity for the establishment of a Zoroastrian World Association and to be brief the objectives of such an Association should be to strengthen the sense of oneness of solidarity in each and every Zoroastrian, to create a sense of security and to promote the welfare of the Zoroastrian community.

Although there were no resolutions to be passed on other topics the present topic No. VI had the latitude to pass a resolution since it had to form a special committee to deal with different pockets of Zoroastrian community all over the world to endeavour to form a Worldwide Federation to follow up the conclusions reached in this Congress and to actively start planning for the 4th World Zoroastrian Congress.

The pros and cons, whether resolutions should be passed, were considered and the sense of the house was for passing the resolution. The topic was then discussed.

A suggestion was made to organise a body on the lines of the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A.

A suggestion was also made for experimental living among the Parsis in India and abroad.

#### MR. RUSTOM C. SUNTOOK

\* Research Scholar in economics of Cotton Commodities and Price Structure, Made valuable contribution in this direction, delegate of Indian Government at International Conferences for Cotton, frequent visitor of Iran, full of zeal and studies of the Zoroastrian Religion and the community.



We should have a kind of an organisation which enables all Zoroastrians, lofty and humble, to take part in its deliberations.

A delegate from London stated that last year a Seminar was held in London and a resolution was passed to have a World Organisation.

A delegate stated that there had been a suggestion from the Shahenshah of Iran to have a common market of Pakistan, India and Iran and if eventually this should come about a organisation as envisaged would form a nucleus.

A suggestion was made that if the headquarters of the World Organisation is situated in Bombay it should be entirely an independent body.

The organisation should be given some authority and funds so that it could carry on its activities.

#### Sunday 8-1-1978 : Afternoon Session

Chairman : Mr. J. N. Guzder

2.00 to 3.30 P.M.	—	Concluding Session
3.30 to 4.00 P.M.	—	Coffee Break
4.00 to 5.30 P.M.	—	Concluding Session.

MR. JAMSHED N. GUZDER was the Chairman of the Session. He stated that the present convention had been, according to many, a "unique" experience. He himself in the opening paragraph of his speech on the Inauguration Day had mentioned the word "unique" and it appeared that his prediction had come true. He was happy to note that during the four days of the Congress they had lived like one happy family and had discussed matters which concerned the community vitally and deeply. The vast turn out of the delegates and the participants was an example of the hunger that had existed in the Parsi community, especially in Bombay, for knowledge of their community and on matters of religion and its importance.

The first part of the afternoon Session before the tea break was taken up by the Rapporteurs reading their topic reports. Mr. Guzder introduced each Rapporteur before the report was read. (Note : Salient points of these reports have already been given earlier including suggestions and/or recommendations at the end of each topic. Some of the Rapporteurs have also summarised their papers to give a succinct idea before giving their suggestions or recommendations. Since these have already been dealt with in this summary report we have not thought it necessary to reproduce the same again.)

The Session after the tea break was extremely lively and with Mr. Guzder's subtle humour it made the proceedings more lively. As some persons did not have a chance to speak on the earlier days they were allowed to speak and Mr. Guzder even called upon some of them who wanted to speak, specially foreigners, to come on the stage and say a few words.

The first speaker was MR. GIEV AVARI, a Member of the Parliament from Nagpur Constituency. Mr. Avari, a 27 year old Parsi and the youngest Member of the Parliament, said he was very pleased to involve himself into the proceedings of the Congress and see many Zoroastrians from all over the world gathered here to discuss the problems of society in such a cordial and

enthusiastic manner. According to him "this gathering was much better than what we have in our Parliament", and therefore he said it made him all the more proud to be a Parsi.

The next speaker was MR. JAL SETHNA of London. He said whatever he spoke represented his own observations and views. Referring to what the American and Canadian delegates had to say he said that although they (Londoners) were also in the Western Hemisphere they had not succumbed to any panic-oriented reforms. According to him the Zoroastrian population in U.K. could be anywhere around 3500 to 4000. In the last 30 years with the arrival of Zoroastrians from India, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Zanzibar, Mombassa, Uganda, and Aden, England had a thriving Zoroastrian population and had become a stronghold of staunch Zoroastrians. He admitted that the Managing Committee of the London Zoroastrian Association were fully aware of the influence of Western society and its way of life on their children. Referring to paucity of Mobeds he said that England had six honorary Mobeds led by Dasturji Dr. Sohrab Kutar. His own two sons and his brother's son had also joined the band of honorary Mobeds. He wanted the American brothers not to rush in panic to manufacture artificial mobeds as he was confident that if a Mobed was genuinely required it was Ahura Mazda's responsibility to provide one! To say that our race may vanish but the religion will survive is a very illogical observation. Our prayers are auto-suggestive. When we build Atash Kadeh we build them to last for ever and when we bring a Zoroastrian child into this world we are confident that our race will survive for ever. This faith and fire shall never die affirmed Mr. Sethna.

During the Session a telegram was received from the Jarthosti Anjuman of Belgaum wishing the Congress all success—addressed to the President, Mr. B. K. Boman-Behram and the Chairman read it to the audience.

The next speaker was DR. SHAHJEHAN. He expressed his pleasure at the rate the Congress had discussed the various topics in the different Sessions. He particularly referred to topic No. V on "Social and Cultural Survey of Zoroastrians in the Recent Past and Suggestions for the Future" and thanked Prof. Mody and Prof. Sheriar, the Chairman and Rapporteurs respectively, for making Sessions "very, very good". He did not like mixed marriages and said ours was the best religion in the world.

Since there were no more speakers from the audience who wanted to have a say, the Chairman carried on with the work of the rest of the Session. He detailed the circumstances of how the present Congress came to be held. It was, he said, Mr. Shiavax Nargolwala of Delhi who had broached this subject before the late Lady Hirabai Cowasjee Jehangir to hold the Third World Zoroastrian Congress. He spoke to him (Mr. Guzder) also. After some discussion and inquiries the late Lady Jehangir gave Mr. Shiavax Nargolwala the permission to hold the Congress by all means but in Delhi. Mr. Nargolwala, however, approached Mr. Guzder and in consultation with Mr. B. K. Boman-Behram and others it was decided to hold the Congress in Bombay, as Bombay was the best place where we could get a good audience. He was then saddled with the task of fixing the details and he undertook to carry it out. Earlier it was decided to hold the Congress in November 1976, then the date was fixed at November 1977 and finally it was agreed to hold it in January 1978.



In order to divide the work Mr. Guzder said he got appointed the following Committees:

- 1) Reception Committee.
- 2) Souvenir and Fund Raising Committee.
- 3) Hospitality Committee.
- 4) Subjects Committee.
- 5) Souvenir Editorial Committee.
- 6) Publicity and Public Relations Committee.

He then introduced to the audience all the Chairmen of the Committees, namely, Mrs. Gulestan Billimoria (Reception Committee), Mrs. Thrity Taleyarkhan (Souvenir & Fund Raising Committee), Mrs. Najoo Bhabha (Hospitality Committee) (vice Mr. Soli Pavri who had resigned as he had to leave India for some work being the only Asian on the Board of Rotary International), Mr. Justice Jal R. Vimadalal (Subjects Committee), Mr. Homi J.H. Taleyarkhan (Souvenir Editorial Committee) and Mr. Noshir Irani (Publicity & Public Relations Committee).

Mr. Guzder thanked the Chamarbaugwalla family for doing the Souvenir printing free.

Mr. Burjore Poonawalla was thanked for making the blocks of photographs free.

He regretted that Lady Hirabai Cowasjee Jehangir, who took a great deal of interest in sponsoring the Congress, was not there any more. After her it was Mr. Erach A. Nadirshah who, as the Chairman of the Parsi Punchayet and President of the Federation of the Anjumans of India, helped him in his endeavours followed by Mr. B. K. Boman-Behram on Mr. Erach Nadirshah's retirement, though ofcourse Mr. Boman-Behram had been helping him from the very first. Mr. Guzder regretted that Mr. Boman-Behram, was not there on account of his indisposition. It was Mr. Boman-Behram, who encouraged Mr. Guzder to work, and finally he himself fell ill. Mr. Guzder also thanked Mr. Shiavaz Nargolwala for his background help, and Mr. Sapur F. Desai for his support, advice and guidance.

Mr. Guzder then took the audience into confidence to show how the holding of the Congress had become cause celebre in the Parsi news papers and how it survived the vicissitudes. The public discussion had almost gone to the point of asking the sponsors to cancel the Congress and some of his colleagues were under a great strain and pressure was brought to bear from several sources. He himself was, however, firmly of the opinion that for better or for worse we should go ahead and now he told the audience to judge how the Congress had become a great success.

Somebody had raised the question of Dasturjis and Scholars not taking part in the Congress. Mr. Guzder said that he had personally seen them and requested them to participate but in their wisdom they had decided otherwise. There was a fear that the Congress would spell the death knell of the community and every Tom, Dick and Harry would be welcomed to visit the Fire Temples. Mr. Guzder made bold to say assertively "We are not the people who wish

to preside over the liquidation of our community. God strike me dead if I have that intention."

He drew the attention of the audience to the suffering which the Iranian Zoroastrians had gone through through centuries and they survived while we in India lived in peace and comparative comfort.

He thanked Mr. Peshotan Nargolwala one of the Honorary Secretaries of the Congress for offering his services as soon as he retired from the Tatas and for having put in such good work. Mr. Guzder said that he had conscripted a number of members of the Parsi Punchayet staff including Commander N. H. Vacha, Miss Gool J. Tata and Miss S. D. Master. Humorously he referred to Miss Gool Tata as a tabloid of the Parsi community—miniscule, small in physique and stature but fantastic in achievements. Commander Vacha, Miss Tata and Miss Master were called on the stage and introduced to the audience. The two ladies were given one rose each as token of appreciation.

Mr. Guzder then gave some statistics. 1541 participants had taken part in the Congress out of which 1147 were delegates from Bombay and 176 from the rest of India. 165 came from Iran and a fantastic contingent followed by 16 from U.S.A., 13 from Pakistan, 12 from Europe, 6 from Canada, 3 from Australia, 2 from Africa and one from Japan.

The Chairman then called upon Dr. Farang Mehr to say a few words.

Dr. Mehr as Vice-President of the Congress moved a vote of thanks to all the participants of the Congress. He felt proud that the way the business of the Conference had been conducted, and the way every participant had acted, indicated maturity, Zarthosti behaviour, tolerance, and understanding while none thought he had an exclusive right of possession of wisdom and intellect.

Dr. Mehr praised Mr. Guzder for his sincerity, efficiency and hard work. He also praised M/s. Nargolwala and Vacha and reminded them of their duty to pave their way for the establishment of the coordinating agency and convening of the Fourth Zoroastrian Congress—Insha Allah in Iran.

He also thanked the audience for the sentiments expressed by them on the message of the Shahenshah of Iran and for his well-being. He expressed a desire that the Congress should convey the gratitude of all to the President of India and to the Ministers who came and gave us an honour to be present in the inaugural Session.

The Chairman stated that a letter of thanks to the Shahenshah had been written, which Dr. Farang Mehr will carry with him and present it to the Shahenshah of Iran expressing our gratitude to him for his inspiring message at the Inauguration.

Mr. Guzder then referred to the finances of the Congress and stated that as they were in good health and did not need any help from trusts, it was decided to return Rs. 25,000/- donated by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and Rs. 20,000/- to the Surat Parsi Punchayet and all other donations from other Anjumans.

Dr. Varjawand from Iran then spoke. He said he had seen some children in a Parsi Baug some 15 years ago in Bombay performing the drama of Sohrab and Rustom. He then figuratively stated that there were millions of Sohrabs



in Iran who wanted to find their Rustom and added we should not deprive them of their legitimate heritage. He called them neo-Zoroastrians and exhorted the community to "accept them into our faith".

The Chairman then thanked the Rapporteurs of all the Sessions for the good work that they had done.

Mr. Peshotan Nargolwala then thanked Mr. Jamshed N. Guzder and Mr. B. K. Boman-Behram for the wise leadership they had shown. He also thanked Miss Gool Tata for her lively work and recommended any industrial house to have her as an "expedicator and solid worker". He also thanked Miss S. D. Master and Mr. B. H. Tarapore who had shouldered the brunt of typing.

Mr. Dadi Mistry of Delhi thanked the Organisers and the participants for the success of the Congress. He said that if any of the audience were looking for good jobs outside Bombay, there were jobs available for four engineers, two meteorologists and two sales engineers. He would put them in touch with the employers. He also stated that a Trust had been registered in Delhi in the name of the father of Mr. Nadirshah R. Mulla and he requested donations to the same. He stated that the Federation would like to have an employment data bank, which could help people to have better jobs if they want to do so.

Mr. Keki Bhote of Chicago also thanked the Organisers for the tremendous amount of work that had gone on for days and nights.

Mr. Godrej Sidhwa from Pakistan also thanked the Organisers.

Mr. Behram Sidhwa of Bangalore said that this Congress would be remembered for the opportunity of meeting, at one place under one roof and at one time, so many people from different parts of the world. He added that human understanding was required to solve the problems of survival and if we left aside all the quarrels and constructively worked the Congress would be well rewarded.

Mr. Noshir Irani referred to the following action taken on some of the suggestions at the Congress :

- 1) A Standing Publication Committee had been formed as suggested by Mrs. Jungalwalla for education with representatives from Bombay, Calcutta, Bangalore, Delhi, Tehran, London and New York.
- 2) A group of mothers had decided to conduct lectures on the Zoroastrian Religion for school children in Bombay.
- 3) Dr. Freddie Mehta and Professor Rusi Taraporewalla had agreed, in spite of their busy schedule, to spare time to help in the area of economy.
- 4) Dastur Minocher Homji had offered his services for persons from India and abroad to write to him on any subject of religion.
- 5) Mr. Burjor Antia had offered his services of one hour free to anybody interested in the change of trustees, industries or any legal problems.

Mr. Noshir Irani further stated that there were complaints that youths were not properly represented in the Congress. He then suggested that a youth wing should be started.

Mr. Irani then thanked all concerned starting from His Excellency, the Vice-President of India, the Governor of Maharashtra, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra and ending with all who had helped including Mr. Burjore Pavri of Birla Matushri Sabhaghar. He also thanked Gool and Minoo Engineer and Mr. Keku Nicholson of Selvel for making banners free of cost and the Commissioner of Police Chaubal and his men for very ably looking after the traffic problems. He thanked the Personal Secretaries of Mr. J. N. Guzder, namely, Miss Veera Vakil and Mrs. Campos for their assistance.

The lucky number was then drawn and it turned out to be 739 of the Souvenir bought by Mr. & Mrs. Cooverji Bhabha. The prize was a return Air Ticket from Bombay to Amsterdam.

Dasturji Minocher Homji then said a prayer and translated it which meant to convey that through the deliberations we may endeavour towards intelligent participation and get nearer to inner light, wisdom and understanding.

Finally some of the members of the Young Collegians Zoroastrian Association sang "Chhaiye Hame Zarhosti".

Here it would be best to say a few words about the entertainment programmes.

In the evening of 5th January 1978 a Parsi operatta entitled "Shera Shirin Nu Spinstershood" was staged under the direction of Mrs. Freni Ponda and Mrs. Gool Gandhi. It was enjoyed by all in the cool atmosphere of the Birla Matushri Sabhaghar.

In the evening of 6th January 1978 Audio-Visual Cultural-Cum-Fashion Show was held, followed by a contributory Dinner, in which 1,300 took part. This was on the Cooperage Grounds.

The Audio-Visual Cultural-Cum-Fashion Show made a deep impression on many. The Audio-Visual Programme was masterminded by Mrs. Homai N. Padamjee. It started with the beginning of creation followed by stretches of Pishdadian, Keyanian, Achaemenian and Sassanian Cameos. In the Pishdadian Cameos Shah Jamshed's rule and his fall were well depicted. The ice age with deluge was very much appreciated. The Keyanian Cameos dealt with Zal-Rudabeh and the birth of Rustom by Caesarean Section and his valorous exploits. After the fall of Yezdezard III the entry of Parsis into India and their meeting Jadi Rana were portrayed.

A few portraits of great stalwarts like Dadabhoy Naoroji, Phirozeshaw Mehta, Jamsnedji Tata with his family members, Dinshaw Vatcha, Dinshaw Mulla, Wadia, et al with Bombay highlights were very much appreciated by the receptive audience. Birth of Zarathustra was portrayed by shadow play.

The fashion show started with what the Parsis were when they came to India over 1200 years ago and ended with the modern touch and outlook. Some mills had made this possible.

Mrs. Padamjee was assisted by a band of dedicated helpers like Salome Kapur, Homi Daruwala, the Western Outdoor Advertising, Suresh Nanavatty and his co-workers.



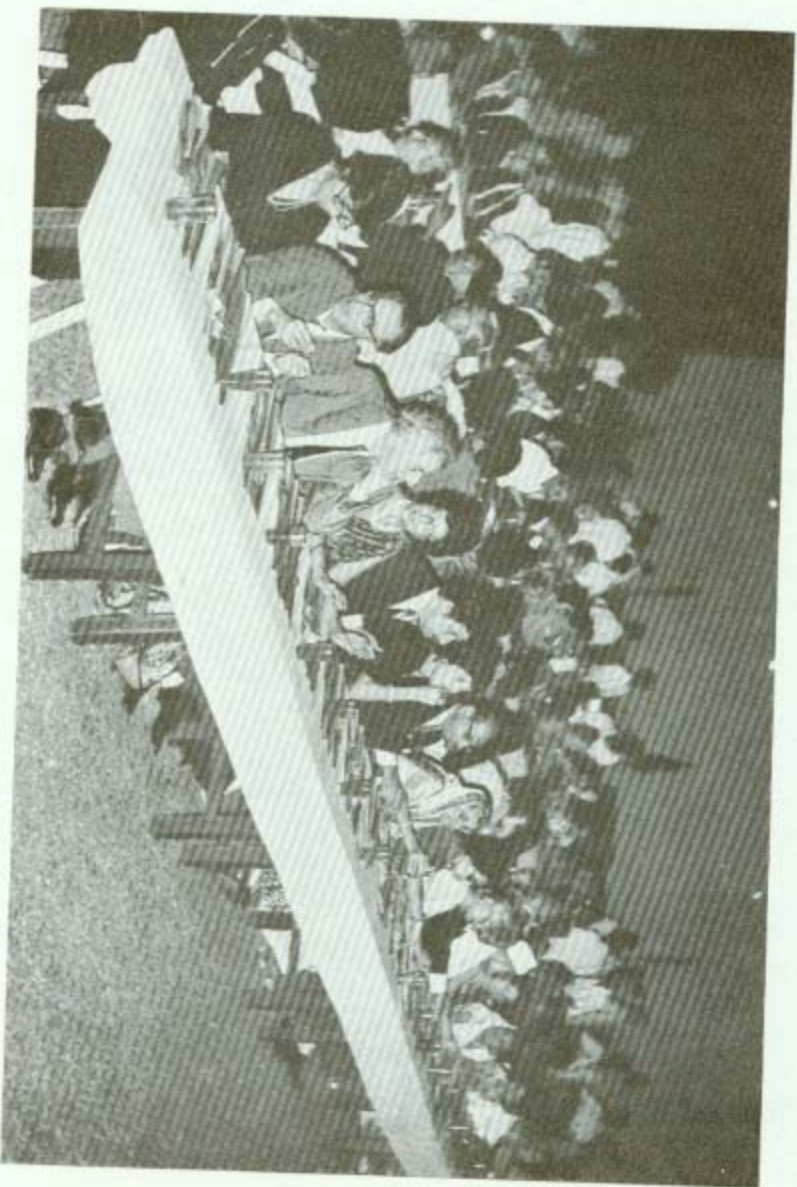
In the evening of the 7th January 1978 there was a Parsi social play "Bicharo Burjore" staged by Yezdi Karanjia and his group from Surat. It was enjoyed by many in the cool atmosphere of the Birla Matushri Sabhaghar.

Mr. Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, ex-Ambassador of India to Libya got out a fine souvenir which contains several valuable articles, short notes on some of the Panchayets and Anjumans of India and Associations Abroad.



Shri B. D. Jati, Vice-President of India, being received at Santa Cruz Airport by Shri Jamshed N. Guzder, Chairman of the Congress, and other dignitaries. L to R: Shri Vasant Rao Patil, Chief Minister, State of Maharashtra, Shri H. J. H. Talevarkhan, former Indian Ambassador to Libya, Shri Narendra N. Kapadia, Sheriff of Bombay.





View of guests at traditional Parsee dinner



Welcome Address by Shri B. K. Boman-Behram, President, on Inauguration at Birla  
Matushri Sabhagar.





Some VIPs at Inauguration, R to L : Shri B. K. Boman-Behram, Shri Sadiq Ali, Governor of Maharashtra, Shri B. D. Jatti, Vice-President of India, Shri Vasant Rao Patil, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Mr. Nani N. Palkhiwalla, Dr. Farhang Mehr.



Shri B. D. Jatti, Vice-President of India, inaugurating the III World Zoroastrian Congress.



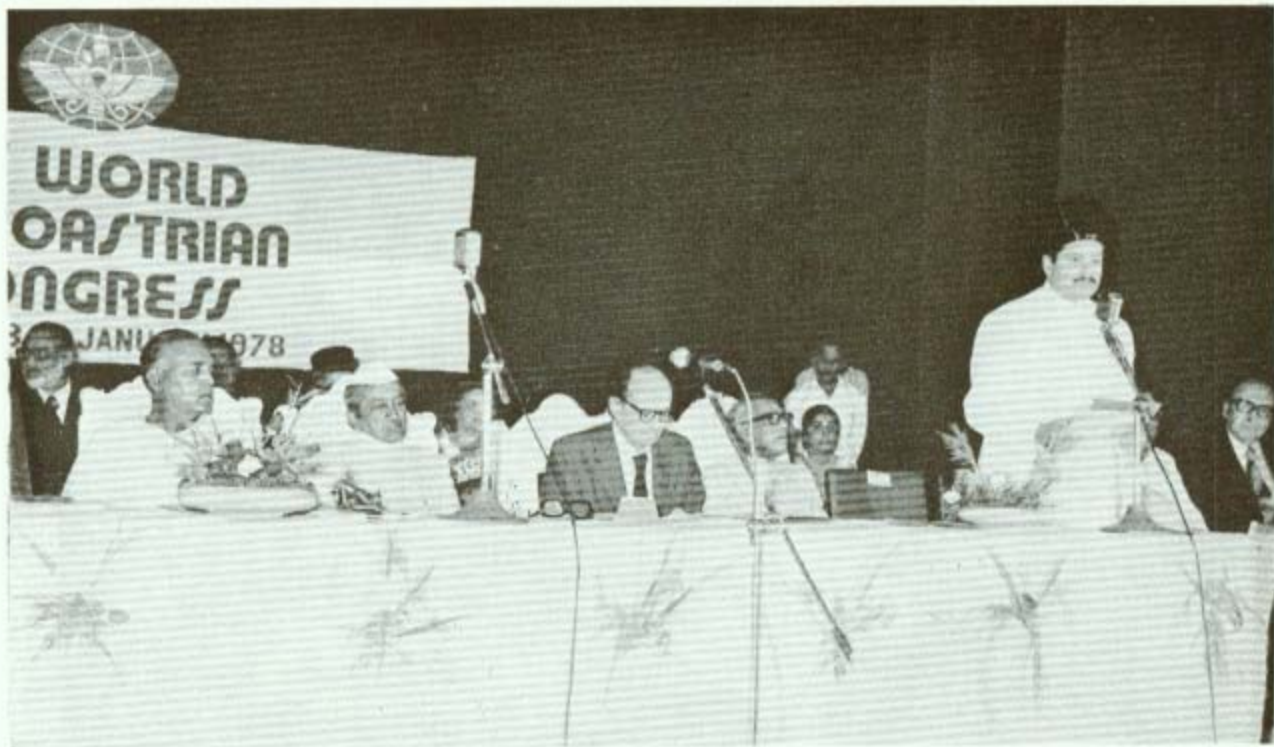


Close-up of Shri B. D. Jatti, Vice-President of India, addressing the Congress.



Shri B. K. Boman-Behram presenting a cheque for Rs. 50,000 to Shri B. D. Jatti, Vice-President of India, for the Andhra Pradesh Cyclone Relief Fund.





Shri Jamshed N. Guzder, Chairman of the Congress, addressing the gathering.



Smt. Perviz F. Dotiwala, Member of Executive Committee, presenting flowers  
to Smt. Shalinitai Patil.





View of audience at the Inauguration.



Another view of audience at the Inauguration.





Girls of Sir J. J. Parsee Benevolent Institution singing the National Anthem  
at conclusion of the Inauguration.



Mrs. Roda Mistry, Minister for Social Welfare, Andhra Pradesh Government, addressing one of the business Sessions at C. J. Hall,



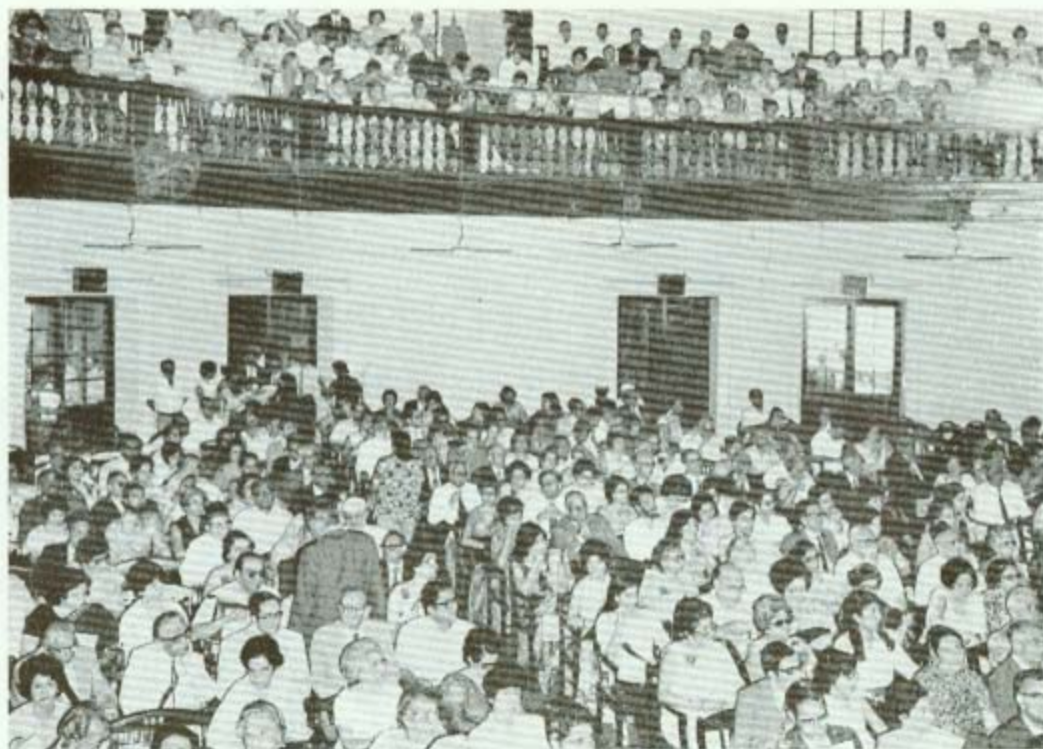


Shri Burjor H. Antia, Chairman of Session "The Priestly Class—Its Present Condition and Future Uplift" delivering his Address. Speakers L to R: Shri Peshotan D. Nargolwala, Dr. Peshotan Peer, Dr. Buzarjmehr Mehr, Ervard Godrej Sidhwa (Pakistan).

Some of the delegates at a business Session at C. J. Hall.







Another view of delegates at a business Session at C. J. Hall.



Scene from Audio-Visual 'Tavarikh' presented by Mrs. Homai N. Pudumjee.





Another scene from 'Tavarikh'.



Scene from "Tavarikh".



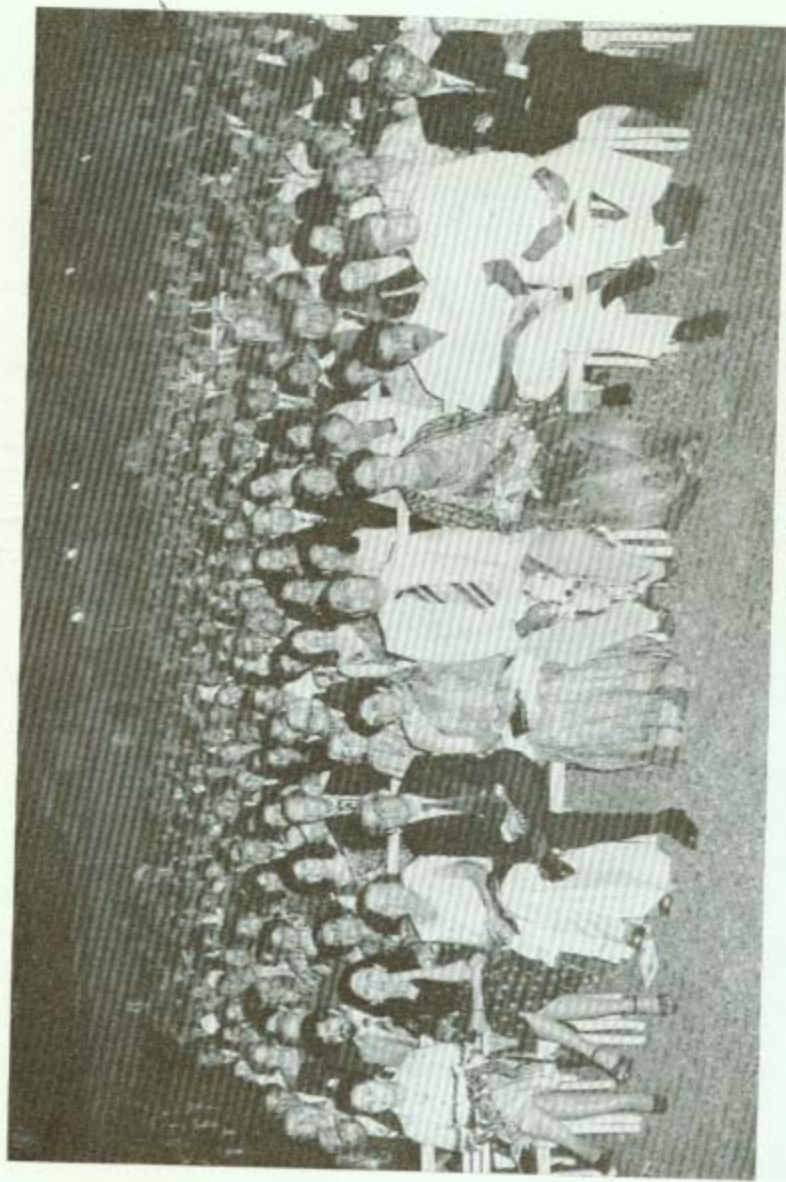


Scene from 'Tavarikh'.



VIPs intently watching 'Tavarikh'. From right: Mme Guiv, Arbab Rustom Guiv, Shri Naval H. Tata, Smt. Simone N. Tata, Shri Shiavux D. Nargolwala, 2nd Row Right: Shri & Smt. Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan.





Another view of audience watching 'Tavarikh'.



Invocation Prayer by Dasturji N. D. Minocher-Homji





Guests at traditional Parsee dinner being looked after by Shri Jamshed N. Guzder. From Right: Arbab Rustom Guiv, Mme Guiv, Shri Naval H. Tata, Smt. Simone N. Tata, Mme Farangis S. Engineer, Dr. and Mrs. Mahyair Ardeshiri and Mrs. Meher Strom.